

Statistical

News

OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS

ISSUE: III
SPRING 1996

**WHERE HAVE ALL THE HOURS
GONE? - MEASURING TIME
USE IN THE UK**



ALSO INCLUDES:

- **THE NEW FACE OF STATISTICS IN NORTHERN IRELAND**
- **ELECTRONIC DISSEMINATION OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS**
- **USERS' VIEWS OF GSS SOCIAL & REGIONAL PUBLICATIONS**
- **A SEMINAR ON FINANCIAL DATA**
- **ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF INDUSTRY AND OCCUPATION CODING**



A PUBLICATION OF THE GOVERNMENT STATISTICAL SERVICE

It is hoped that Statistical News will be of service and interest not only to professional statisticians but to everybody who uses statistics. I should therefore be glad to receive comments from readers on the adequacy of its scope, coverage or treatment of topics and their suggestions for improvement.

Enquiries about individual items in this issue should be made to the appropriate sources where indicated; otherwise they should be addressed to:

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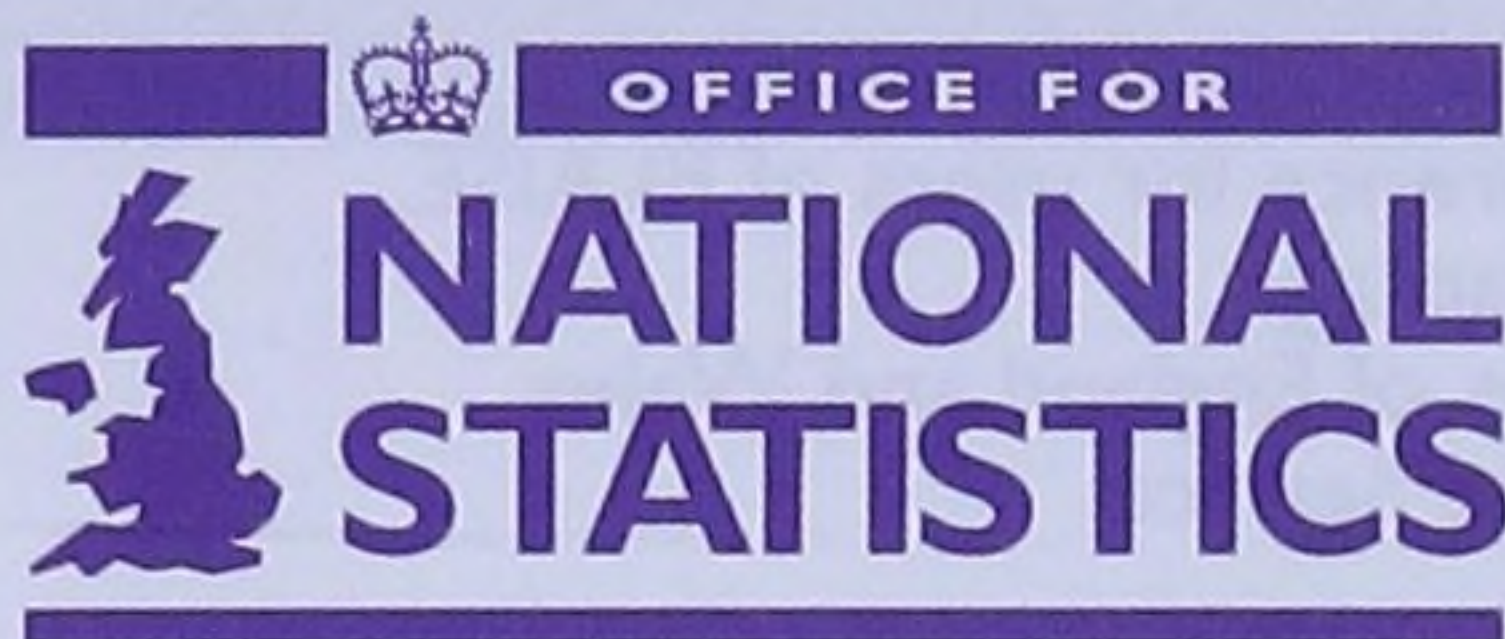
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Office for National Statistics
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ISBN 011 537451- 5
ISSN 0017-3630



STATISTICAL NEWS

DEVELOPMENTS IN BRITISH OFFICIAL STATISTICS

SPRING 1996 - No. 111



THE GOVERNMENT STATISTICAL SERVICE MISSION

To provide Parliament, government and the wider community with the statistical information, analysis and advice needed to improve decision making, stimulate research and inform debate

No 103 Winter 1993/94

OPCS sponsors International Conference for users of BLAISE,
the Computer Aided Interviewing Package
Projections of the prison populations of England and Wales
Performance Indicators for the Police Service
Tackling a quality project

Tony Manners
Jackie Orme
Lawrence Davidoff
Paul Vickers and Justin Vetta

No 104 Spring 1994

Dissemination and marketing strategy of the Labour Force Survey
Survey of public attitudes to the environment 1993
The Gambia Hepatitis Intervention Study (GHIS)
Census Validation Surveys - design Issues raised by international comparisons

Wendy Baillie
John Custance / Tom Marlow
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Patrick Heady

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Gross National Product - Its role in funding the EC and the impact
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Passing the TES(t): Training of European Statisticians
The Stagiare Scheme

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The 1991 London Area Transport Survey
The Family Expenditure Survey - some recent developments
Preparing undergraduates for careers in the Government
Statistical Service: A view from the inside

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Darren Short

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Hospital and ambulance league tables for England
Ukraine: Statistics for a Market Economy
Measuring Quality of Service on Cellular Radio Networks
Intrastat: Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)

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No 108 Summer 1995

New Head for the GSS
Towards a Statistical Profile of the UK Environmental Industry
A New Statistics Code
Customer Satisfaction with Labour Force Survey Local Area Data Services

Dr Tim Holt
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The Labour Force Survey? - What do they want all that information for?
Small and medium size enterprises - How many and how important
The Inter-Departmental Business Register
The Central Statistical Office's distribution of Income estimates

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Frances Sly
Ian Dale
John Perry
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Getting it right first time
The MAFF Reference Database
Documenting the Labour Force Survey
Survey of the Miscellaneous Mechanical Engineering
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Business Statistics Users' Conference

Trevor Benn
Beccy Wallace
Ian Webb
Richard Laux

Nick Rudoe
Michael Prestwood/Chris Kirri

Copies of the above and earlier articles may be obtained from:

The Library, Room 1.001
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The cost is £5 a copy, inclusive of postage and handling, for the articles listed, and for articles from earlier issues. The appropriate remittance should accompany each order. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to 'The Office for National Statistics'.

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INTRODUCING THE OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS

The Office for National Statistics was created on the 1st April 1996 from a merger of the Central Statistical Office and the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, following an extensive consultation exercise. It exists to provide Parliament, government and the wider community with the statistical information, analysis and advice needed to improve decision making, stimulate research and inform debate; and to register key life events.

The Office, under its Director Tim Holt who is also the Head of the Government Statistical Service, has a staff of about 3,000 operating in London, Newport (Gwent), Runcorn, Southport and Titchfield (Hampshire), providing the nation with a wide range of statistical information, including our national accounts, measures of inflation, business statistics, labour market indicators, vital statistics on births, marriages and deaths and population estimates and projections. The Office works in partnership with others in the Government Statistical Service to provide analyses of social and economic trends, to examine regional trends and profiles, and to monitor the health of the nation. It seeks to get statistics used for the benefit of all in our society.

Through the registration of births, marriages and deaths the work of the Office touches directly on each and every citizen. In fulfilling this and all its functions a key objective for the Office is to provide a high quality service to its customers, within the context of the Citizen's Charter. Each year the Chancellor of the Exchequer sets challenging performance targets in pursuance of this and the

Office's other aims and objectives.

The ONS Framework Document directs and guides the work of the Office. It establishes its status and governance and describes its aims,



TIM HOLT



objectives and functions. It sets out the responsibilities of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, as the minister accountable to Parliament for its activities,

and the responsibilities of the Director for operational, professional and other matters. The Document further describes the statutory framework and frameworks for performance assessment, personnel management, data collection and accounting.

The ONS Business Plan 1996/97 - 1998/99 outlines the strategic plans for each of the seven business areas within the Office for National Statistics. It covers a brief description of the work for each area; its main outputs; a summary of planned developments over the planning period; and the estimated resources required, in terms of cash and staff numbers.



Both the ONS Framework Document and Business Plan are available from the:

ONS LIBRARY ☎ 01633 812973

Tim Holt's letter which introduced the ONS launch pack is reproduced opposite.

Director, and Head of the
Government Statistical Service

Tel: 0171 270 6079
Fax: 0171 270 6019

D. (Tim) Holt PhD

28 March 1996

Dear Reader

It is not easy to know how to word the salutation at the start of this letter since it will be read by a variety of people with very different interests in the data and services to be provided by the fledgling Office for National Statistics.

But, whatever the nature of your interest, I take it you will share my excitement at the creation of ONS. For the first time in this country, a single government agency will provide a comprehensive picture of the economic and social life of the nation.

This means that all the important data about the lives of everyone in Britain, together with information about business and high-level economic and social statistics, will be brought together in a single organisation. An important part of our mission is to make that information more accessible and easier to understand.

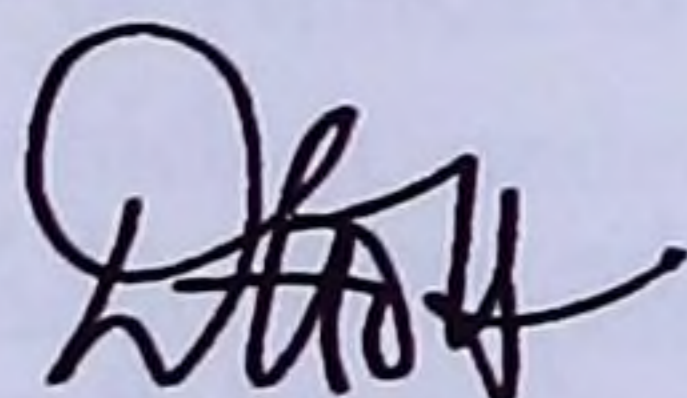
ONS is being formed by merging the Central Statistical Office and the Office of Population Censuses & Surveys. Both have long and honourable histories and they share a tradition of dedication and professionalism.

Traditionally too, they have worked in close cooperation with other parts of the Government Statistical Service. That will continue, for if ONS is to make statistics more user-friendly then its staff will have to work hand in glove with colleagues in other government departments.

Finally, let me say that ONS aims to be an open, customer-focused organisation. We shall succeed in our aims only if we give our customers the services and products they want.

I would be glad to hear your views.

Yours sincerely



Tim Holt

THE NEW FACE OF STATISTICS IN NORTHERN IRELAND ...

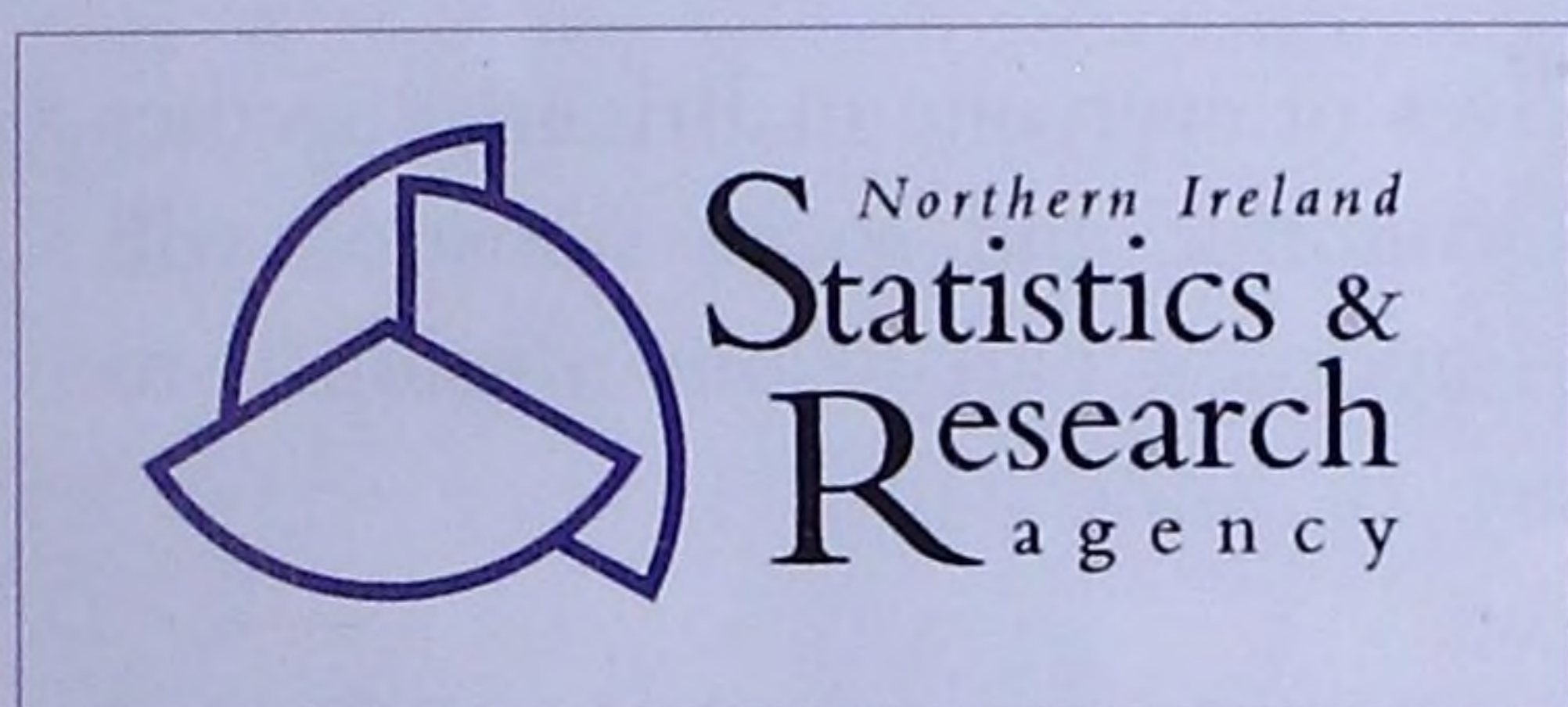
THE NORTHERN IRELAND STATISTICS AND RESEARCH AGENCY (NISRA)



By Edgar Jardine

As part of the Government Reform Initiative the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA) has been established as an executive agency within the Department of Finance

and Personnel with effect from 1 April 1996.



The Agency will provide statistics, social research and registration services, and will be responsible for the taking of the Census of Population. The work of NISRA will closely mirror aspects of the work carried out by the Office for National Statistics with which it will have strong links.

BACKGROUND

Central Government in Northern Ireland (NI) is headed by the Secretary of State for NI, assisted by his Ministers. The Secretary of State is responsible for the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) directed by a Permanent Under Secretary, the Central Secretariat under the aegis of the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS) and six NI Departments, each with a NICS Permanent Secretary.

The NIO is a UK government department, operating from both London and Belfast. It is responsible for political and constitutional matters, security, broad economic questions and any major policy issues.

The six NI Departments are:

- ◆ Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland (DANI)
- ◆ Department of Economic Development (DED)
- ◆ Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DENI)
- ◆ Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland (DOE)
- ◆ Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP)
- ◆ Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS)

In the early 1970s the need for expansion of professional services from economics into the social area was acknowledged within government. The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency has evolved from a small nucleus of two posts which formed the Social Research Section of the Economics and Statistics Unit in 1974. In 1987, as a result of a review by external consultants, responsibility for all statistical work was transferred to Statistics and Social Division (SSD) within DFP.

In April 1994, following the merger of SSD with the Census Office and the General Register Office (previously within the DHSS), key data

on NI society and its economy were for the first time centralised in a single organisation. This laid the foundation for the current Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency which benefits from having access to comprehensive data sets on many aspects of NI society and economy.

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency has two main business areas. First, NISRA staff provide statistics and social research services to NI Government Departments and Agencies and to some Non-Departmental Public Bodies to assist in policy making, monitoring and evaluation. The information produced by the Agency also informs debate in Parliament and the wider community.

The second business area is the registration of key life events. Through the General Register Office (GRO) for Northern Ireland, NISRA undertakes the registration of births, marriages, adoptions and deaths in NI and produces summary statistics relating to these events as well as annual population estimates.

NISRA is the principal source of official information on Northern Ireland's population and socio-economic conditions. Agency staff collect data from individuals, households and businesses as well as from organisations such as schools, hospitals and the courts in order to monitor change in Northern Ireland's society and economy. In addition, a considerable amount of statistical and research work is contracted out to academic institutions and to the private sector each year. While Government Departments and Agencies are the principal customers for NISRA's outputs, it is the policy of NISRA to disseminate the results of research which it undertakes or commissions as a contribution to Open Government.

THE BUSINESS OF THE AGENCY

The principal functions of the Agency and its staff are as follows:

- ◆ Supporting the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland as Government's principal advisory body on statistics and social research;
- ◆ Providing and co-ordinating professional statistics and research services and advice to Northern Ireland Government Departments, Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies;
- ◆ Collecting, analysing and making available official statistics which describe Northern Ireland society, its economy, population and public services;
- ◆ Providing high quality demographic information to enable the number and the condition of the population to be monitored and changes over time to be identified;
- ◆ Supporting, facilitating and contributing to the development of inter-departmental social policies;
- ◆ Ensuring that common statistical and research standards and best methodology are used in producing Government statistics and social research for Northern Ireland;
- ◆ Contributing to UK, European Union and international statistical series;
- ◆ Making a contribution to the improvement of statistics services within the UK, European Union and internationally; and
- ◆ Administering the marriage laws and providing an efficient and effective system for the registration of births, marriages, adoptions and deaths in Northern Ireland.



L-R Mr Pat Killen (Citizens Charter Panel), Mr Edgar Jardine (Chief Executive, NISRA) Rt Hon Sir John Wheeler (Minister of State), Mr John Semple (Permanent Secretary, Department of Finance and Personnel).

NISRA LAUNCH

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency was launched on 29 March 1996 by the Rt Hon Sir John Wheeler, Minister of State at the Northern Ireland Office.

At the function, which took place in the Stormont Hotel in Belfast, the Minister welcomed the launch of NISRA and told the gathering of Agency staff and customers that timely and reliable statistical and research information was central to modern policy management. He wished the NISRA staff every success in meeting the challenging targets outlined in the Business Plan.

The Minister congratulated the Agency on receiving the endorsement of the Northern Ireland Citizen's Charter Panel for its Charter Statement, which describes the standards of service which the public may expect when dealing with

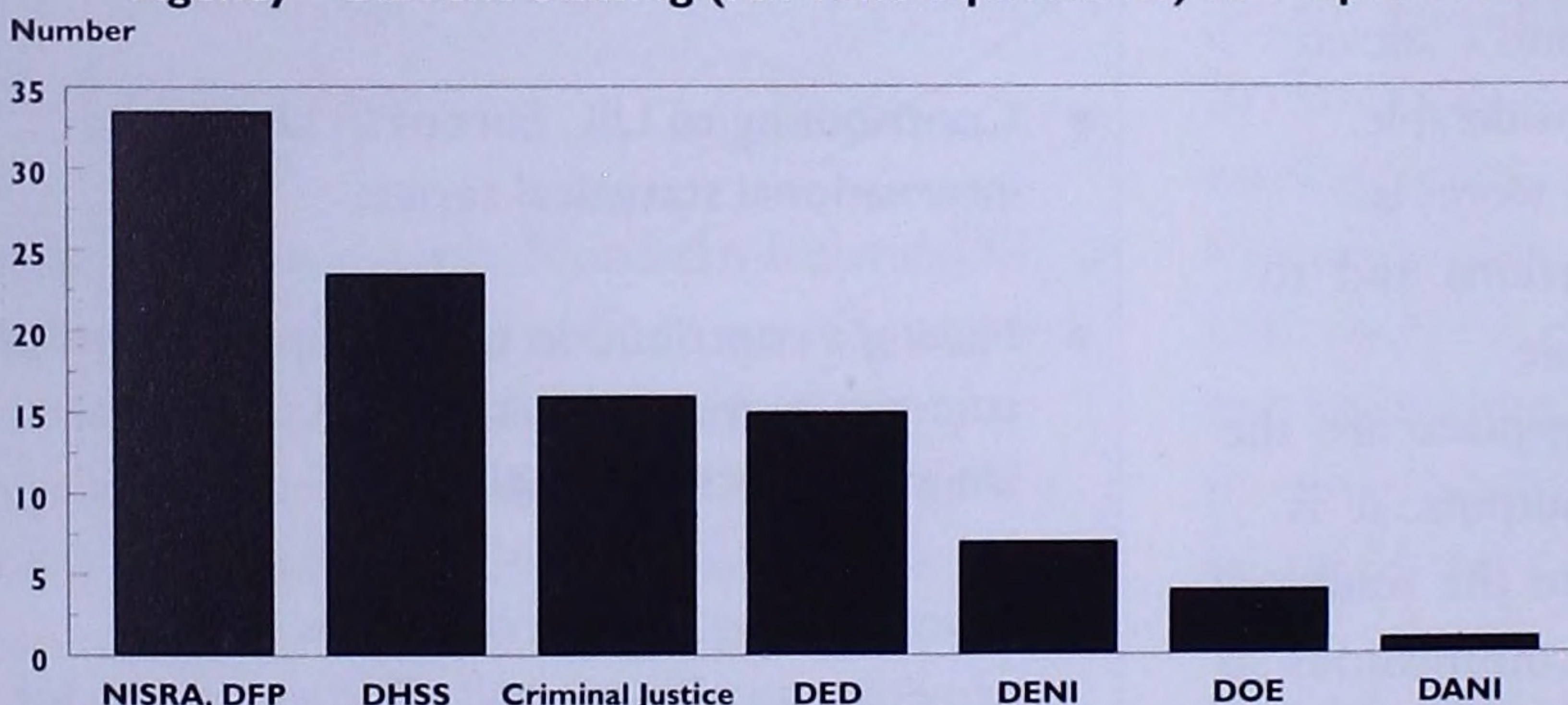
Agency staff. He also said that the Agency would continue to have as a priority the development of its staff including a commitment to achieve accreditation as Investors in People.

NISRA STRUCTURE

NISRA is headed by a Chief Executive (Mr Edgar Jardine) who is supported by 2 senior officials, Dr Norman Caven who is the Registrar General for Northern Ireland and Dr Gerry Mulligan. The Agency employs statisticians and researchers (100 full-time equivalent professional staff) from a variety of numerate disciplines and administrators (83.5 full-time equivalent administrative staff) with relevant business skills.

One third of NISRA professional staff work in Branches which are overseen directly by the Chief Executive, while the majority are seconded on long-term loan to a number of NI Departments, Agencies and Non-Departmental Public Bodies. A detailed breakdown of professional staff by organisation is shown in Chart 1.

Chart 1 Professional staff in the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency - Current Staffing (full-time equivalents) at 1 April 1996



DED includes the Training & Employment Agency and Industrial Development Board.

Criminal Justice includes - Northern Ireland Office, Royal Ulster Constabulary,

NI Court Service, Police Authority for NI and the Probation Board for NI.

NISRA BRANCHES

NISRA Branches which are under the direct oversight of the Chief Executive are:

Expenditure and Evaluation Branch - provides professional advice, briefing and analyses to DFP on matters relevant to public expenditure allocations to NI programmes and advises on all aspects of policy evaluation.

Economic Statistics and Briefing Branch - responsible for the NI input to the UK regional accounts; as part of its briefing role the branch has responsibility for preparing the Northern Ireland Annual Abstract of Statistics and is currently developing the Focus on Northern Ireland publication which will provide a comprehensive statistical profile of Northern Ireland.

Employment Equality Branch - monitors equality of opportunity in the NICS and provides benchmark labour availability statistics to help employers assess the representativeness of their workforces and applicant pools. Also undertakes paybill and manpower modelling to ensure that the human resources of the NICS remain consistent with and responsive to business needs.

Central Survey Unit - provides a professional service in survey design, conduct and analysis to government departments and the wider public sector. The Unit's work covers core surveys such as the Continuous Household Survey (equivalent to the General Household Survey in Great Britain) and the NI element of the Family Expenditure and National Food surveys; an increasingly wide range of survey research projects commissioned by clients, including the Labour Force Survey, the NI Social Attitudes Survey and an International Adult Literacy Survey; a monthly Omnibus survey vehicle in

CORPORATE AIMS

- ◆ to provide Government in Northern Ireland with a statistical and research service to support the formulation, monitoring and evaluation of social and economic policies;
- ◆ to inform debate in Parliament and the wider community about social and economic issues; &
- ◆ to register key life events for the population.

which clients can purchase questions or modules; and a survey advice and consultancy service.

Census Office for Northern Ireland (CONI) - responsible for the taking of the Census of Population in Northern Ireland and for the provision of demographic data.

Central Initiatives Branch - responsible for the management and supply of the research evaluation and information needs of community relations and equality and equity policies and programmes.

NI-CO Statistics and Research Services - provides statistical and research expertise to NI-CO (Northern Ireland Public Sector Enterprises Limited). This work involves hosting study visits and providing overseas consultancy services (mainly in the former Soviet Union) for both statistical projects and other NI-CO projects which require a statistical or social research component.

Social Policy Branch - provides the secretariat for the Social Steering Group (SSG), the group responsible for the co-ordination of social policies across the NI Departments. In addition to servicing the main Group, the branch has crucial responsibilities to SSG subgroups set up to develop new interdepartmental social policies and manages SSG's research programme.

General Register Office - responsible for providing the system for the registration of births, deaths, marriages and adoptions in NI. The office also compiles vital statistics from these records and produces birth, death and marriage certificates to applicants.

Making Belfast Work Central Unit - responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of all Making Belfast Work (MBW) funded activity and for the

management of strategic research projects which are commissioned in order to inform MBW policy.

OUTPOSTED BRANCHES

The 17 outposted Branches (Table 1) provide a wide range of services for Northern Ireland Departments, Agencies and Non-Departmental

TABLE 1- OUTPOSTED BRANCHES

DEPARTMENT, AGENCY OR NON-DEPARTMENTAL PUBLIC BODY	BRANCH NAME
◆ Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland	<i>Farm Census Branch</i>
◆ Department of Economic Development Department of Economic Development Training and Employment Agency Industrial Development Board	<i>Statistics and Research Branch Research and Evaluation Branch Management Systems Information Unit</i>
◆ Department of Education for Northern Ireland	<i>Statistics and Research Branch</i>
◆ Department of Health and Social Services	<i>Analytical Support Branch Research Management Branch Regional Information Branch Social Security Statistics Branch Social Services Inspectorate Data Administration Branch</i>
◆ Department of the Environment for Northern Ireland	<i>Central Statistics and Research Branch</i>
◆ Criminal Justice Branches Northern Ireland Office Royal Ulster Constabulary Northern Ireland Court Service Police Authority for Northern Ireland Probation Board for Northern Ireland	<i>Statistics and Research Branch Crime, Security and Traffic Accident Statistics Management Information Branch Policy Co-ordinating Branch Research and Information Branch</i>

Public Bodies. NISRA staff are called on to support the work of these organisations in a range of ways. This includes preparing statistical and research briefs for Ministers and officials, providing statistical information for public expenditure work, managing and carrying out policy evaluations, dealing with Ministers' Cases and answering Parliamentary Questions. In some organisations NISRA staff have a significant role in commissioning and managing programmes of external research. The Chief Executive is responsible for the career development and professional oversight of all NISRA staff, including those who are outposted.

For further information please contact:

Northern Ireland Statistics and
Research Agency
The Arches Centre
11-13 Bloomfield Avenue
BELFAST BT5 5HD

☎ 01232 526906

GTN 440 26906

Fax: 01232 526948

GTN 440 26948

REGIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS WITHIN ENGLAND

Users of regional statistics should note that the primary classification for the presentation of regional statistics will be changing from the Standard Statistical Regions (SSRs) to the Government Office Regions (GORs). The target date for this change in publications is 1 April 1997. However, where possible and where there is a demand, statistics for the SSRs will continue to be made available.

Further details can be obtained from the:

ONS Library and Information Service,
Room 1.001,
Government Buildings,
Cardiff Road,
Newport, South Wales
NP9 1XG.
Telephone : 01633 812973.

ELECTRONIC DISSEMINATION OF OFFICIAL STATISTICS



By Edie Purdie

The Government Statistical Service (GSS) held its second Electronic Dissemination One Day Conference last October. The conference allowed the GSS to review and share advancements made over the

year, as well as look to future scenarios on the horizon.

Tim Holt, Head of the GSS, opened the conference by focusing on how new technology will drive and shape the future provision of official statistics. New forms of media, such as accessible databases, CD-ROMs and the Internet, will allow the GSS to increasingly provide its users with the products they want, in the formats that they want.

CUSTOMER FOCUS

Dr Holt said that this customer-orientated, user-led electronic environment would encompass the ethos behind both the GSS's mission statement and the Open Government initiatives.

THE GSS MISSION STATEMENT

To provide Parliament, government and the wider community with the statistical information, analysis and advice needed to improve decision making, stimulate research and inform debate.

More access to statistics, more signposting and more common definitions, nomenclature and standards are possible with advancements in technology, as well as the increasing ease with which both users and suppliers of official statistics adopt new initiatives in this area. The GSS has not been left behind; many departments now have home pages on the Internet containing their latest statistics, an increasing number of GSS publications are now available on CD-ROM, and a database of key statistics is one of the major objectives of the new Office for National Statistics.

Philip Powell and Norma Wood from the Marketing divisions of the former Central Statistical Office and the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys continued the theme of customer-orientated initiatives. These two organisations merged in April 1996 to form the ONS which has responsibility for a great wealth of statistics which are of interest to many different user groups. The ONS provides the nation with many of its demographic, health, economic and labour market statistics, and it also carries out many social surveys and the population census.

The ONS will, in consultation with its customers, be developing electronic methods for accessing these and other official statistics. Options under consideration include on-line access to the new database, print-on-demand services, and disk and CD-ROM services. The ONS will also be looking to its peers at the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Statistics New Zealand and Statistics Canada to learn from their experiences.



country. Jon Simmons explained to the audience that as both providers and users of fire statistics, fire brigades want *direct access to carry out local area research, make comparisons between areas within the brigade and with other brigades, improve operational knowledge and provide information to raise public awareness. As confident and computer-literate users they want to be able to do their own analyses of the data.*

NEW DATABASES

The Scottish Office and the Home Office demonstrated how they had developed their own databases to provide data and information to their customers in the way the customers wanted it.

Andrew Wilson-Annan and Graham Jones of the Scottish Office told the audience how they used a reference database to provide management and parliamentary question information, statistics, and corporate material to the whole department. Excel spreadsheets were the basis for quick and easy access to information which, in paper format, would take up a huge amount of space. The Scottish Office database was an adaptation of the one developed successfully by the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food Economics and Statistics Group, which had been described at the previous year's GSS conference on electronic dissemination, thus reinforcing the value of sharing information throughout the GSS.

The Home Office had developed a system that meets the needs of fire brigades throughout the

As a response to this, the Research and Statistics Department at the Home Office, together with Forvus created the FIRESTAT package using the standard Quicktab software. Now fire brigades can take time series data and

- ◆ tabulate the data in preset or ad-hoc ways, with rows and columns selected from any of the parameters in the data set
- ◆ present the data in a variety of graphical forms
- ◆ export data in one of several standard spreadsheet formats.

Through consultation with customers the Home Office has developed a system which meets their needs while still retaining central coordination, and therefore national standards and assurances of quality and consistency.

STATISTICS ON THE INTERNET

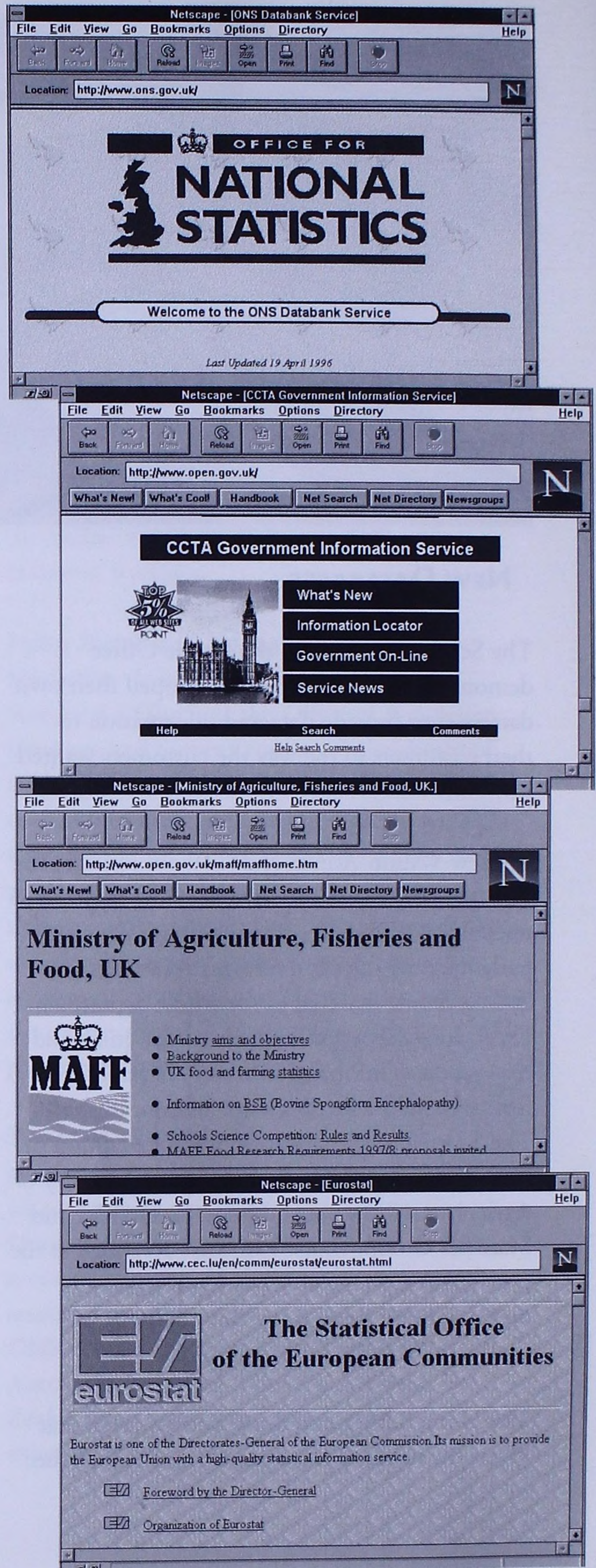
At the 1994 Electronic Dissemination Conference, the GSS was introduced to the opportunities offered by the Information Superhighways, and more specifically, the Internet. A year later, the use and application of this media has risen rapidly, and is seen as a major tool for disseminating official statistics in the future.

Nick Hopkins from CCTA, the Government Centre for Information Systems spoke to the GSS audience on how best to utilise this medium. A number of departments have taken advantage of CCTA's offer to use its Internet server and, as a result, home pages presenting some of the GSS's latest statistics are available to Internet users. The GSS is intending to develop this area further, and an interdepartmental group has reported on the issues surrounding the Internet.

A EUROSTAT PERSPECTIVE

Daniel Byk, Head of Dissemination and Public Relations at the Statistical Office of the European Community (Eurostat), spoke at the conference about the means and methods by which Eurostat had harnessed new technology.

The principle of dissemination in Eurostat is to satisfy demand for data, or even to anticipate demand, through the creation of a network of components of the European Statistical System. The channels used are both private and institutional and it has been suggested that Eurostat and National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) should give data away to companies who could then concentrate on disseminating appropriate products to end users of statistics.



Many users of Eurostat's output, from the European Institutions to individuals, take data in publications, electronically or on-line: some act as agents who pass on data either in raw form or in a value added form (for example further processed, summarised or commented on).

Mr Byk said that several lines of cultural change are needed:

- ◆ a move to the provision of statistical services and away from the provision of statistical products;
- ◆ a move to seeing the statistical product as only part of the final product, for example the use of data in the multi-media version of Encyclopedia Britannica which puts the statistics into context and brings them to life;
- ◆ a move to a coordinated set of products produced in an integrated way and not independently;
- ◆ a move to joint working between Eurostat and the NSIs, with joint approaches to private companies to disseminate and market information.

USER FRIENDLY MULTIMEDIA

Ian Williams and Chris Carrigan from Anderson Consulting introduced the audience to one of the latest innovations in multimedia technology. Based on an interactive video screen, they had developed a system for customers of a building society, to explain the complexities involved in buying a house with simple text and graphics.

By pressing a specific part of the screen, customers could discover the difference between types of mortgages, and how much they would

need to pay each year, amongst other facilities. The system was very user friendly, and made advanced technology easy to use and brought it into the hands of the public.

What use is this to official statistics? Certainly in the future we would like to envisage the public using such systems in bookshops and libraries to browse through the latest statistics. Statistics could also be used in systems dedicated to other topics, such as local information.

A USER'S VIEW

The conference ended with a perspective from one of the GSS's most knowledgeable users. Rob Clements, statistician at the House of Commons Library, told the audience how he'd like to see the GSS providing electronic information in the future.

He and his team at the Library research and analyse data on a huge range of subjects on behalf of MPs. Requests come to them in a variety of ways: for written answers to Parliamentary Questions or constituents' queries, for urgent oral briefing and for general papers of current or regular interest.

The statisticians at the Library welcomed the new emphasis on providing detailed data through various electronic means of access. These were starting to meet the changes in demands from MPs. In particular, the House of Commons Library itself has access to some GSS electronic data: the *National Online Manpower Information System* (NOMIS), the Labour Force Survey database *Quantime*, and the ONS's database are all available to the library staff. They are also making use of the new products on CD-ROM, such as *Social Trends*.

On a cautionary note, Rob said that while the general consensus is that the more electronic information there is available the better, there were some dangers associated with the more liberal access to data. He pointed out that increased efficiency in the provision of information sometimes led to unrealistic expectations for answers to the most obscure questions from his customers. To make proper use of data, the user needs to be provided with the tools and advice needed to analyse, interpret and present the data correctly. In an ideal world, MPs and their staff could be referred directly to a database for their source of enquiry, but without expert knowledge of the data, its limitations and the software this could prove fruitless. A balance must be obtained between the use of published and electronic sources in meeting users' needs.

Ending on a high note, Rob Clements welcomed the initiatives made by the GSS in Electronic Dissemination of statistics, and, as one of the most frequent users of official statistics, was looking forward to further developments. He also extended an invitation to GSS members to visit him and his colleagues at the House of Commons Library to see them in action or discuss any matters of common concern.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the presentations and exhibitions at the conference demonstrated how fast the field of electronic dissemination has grown, and showed how producers of official statistics could successfully plug into this. Given the pace of developments and the new initiatives emerging all the time, another conference is planned for October 1996.

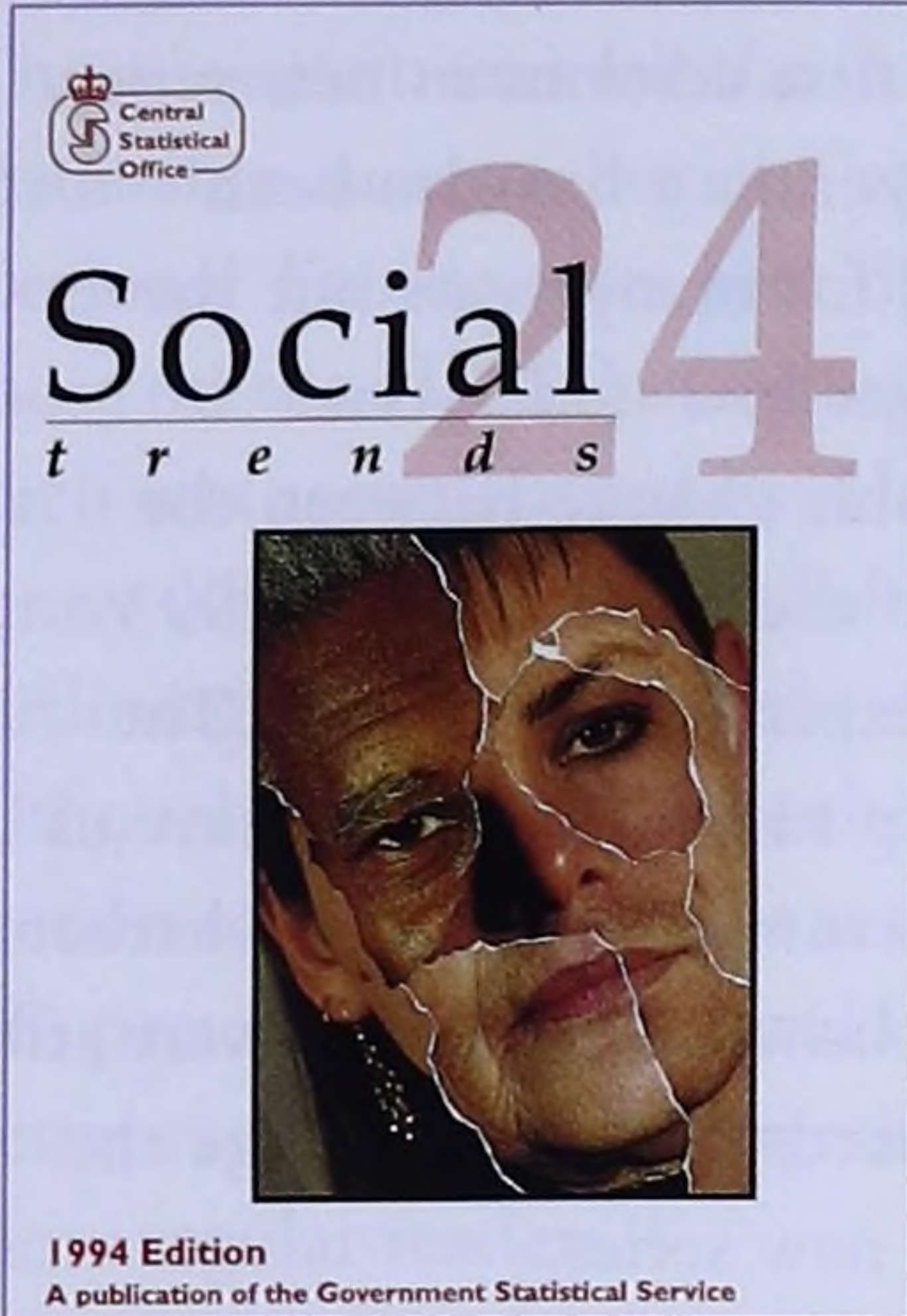
If you are interested in presenting a talk or demonstrating your wares at this conference contact:

Pat Phillpotts

The GSS and International
Computing Liaison Manager
Office for National Statistics

☎ 0171 270 4925

USERS' VIEWS OF GSS SOCIAL AND REGIONAL PUBLICATIONS

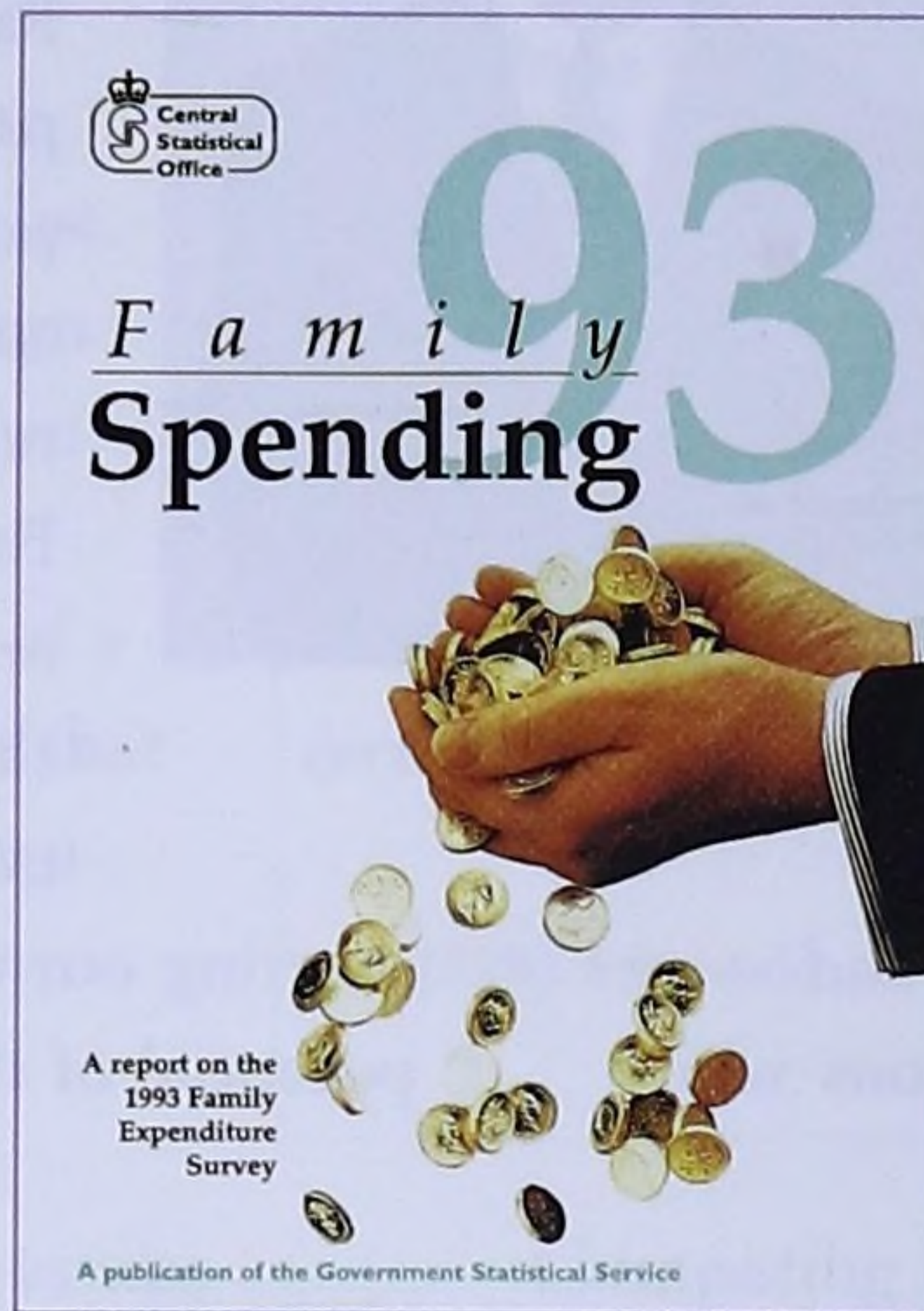


SOCIAL TRENDS 24

'Enjoyable to dip into as well as informative'

'It inevitably leaves you wanting more - it's a bit too generalised'

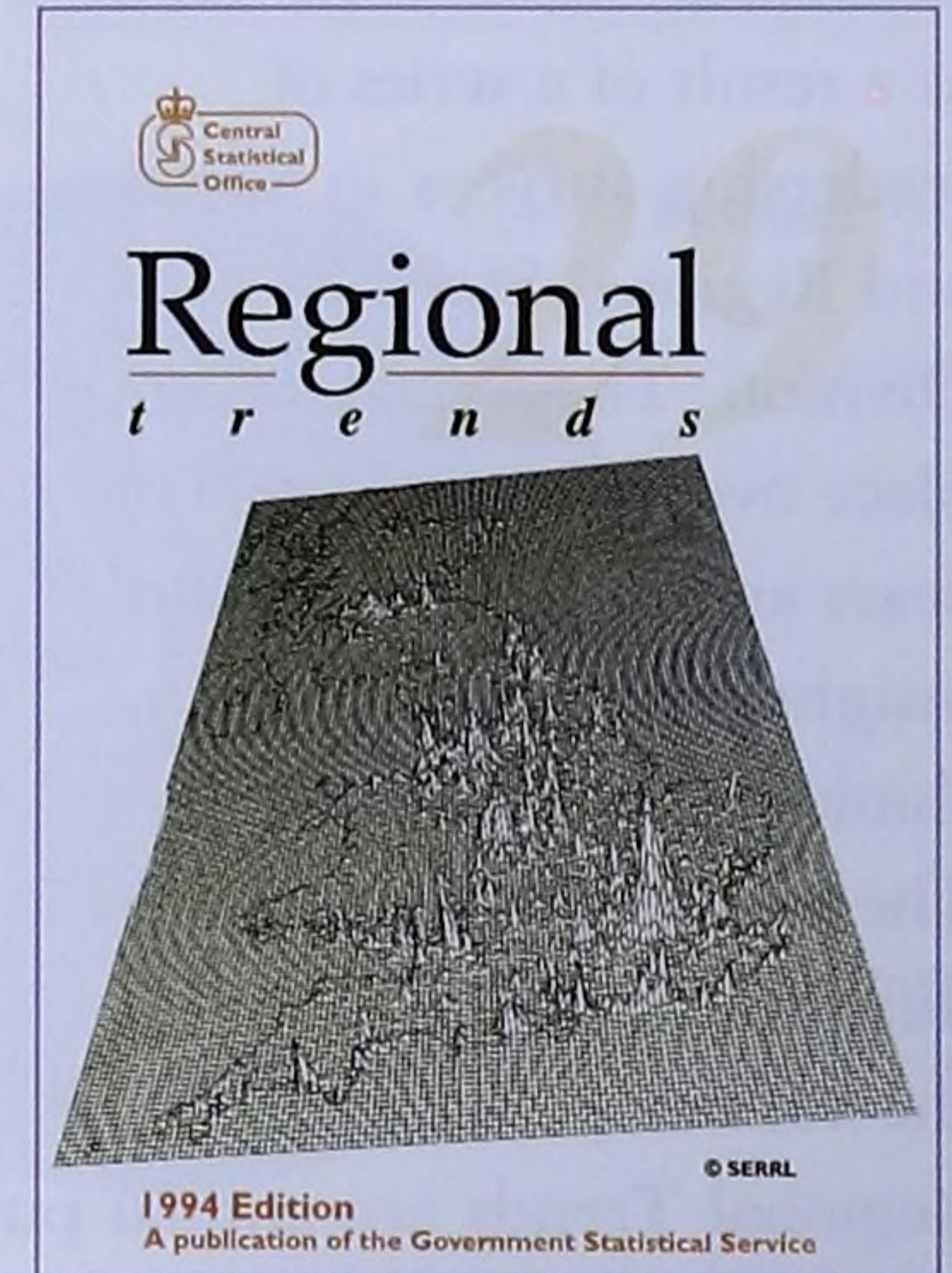
'Excellent balance of soft and serious'



FAMILY SPENDING 1993

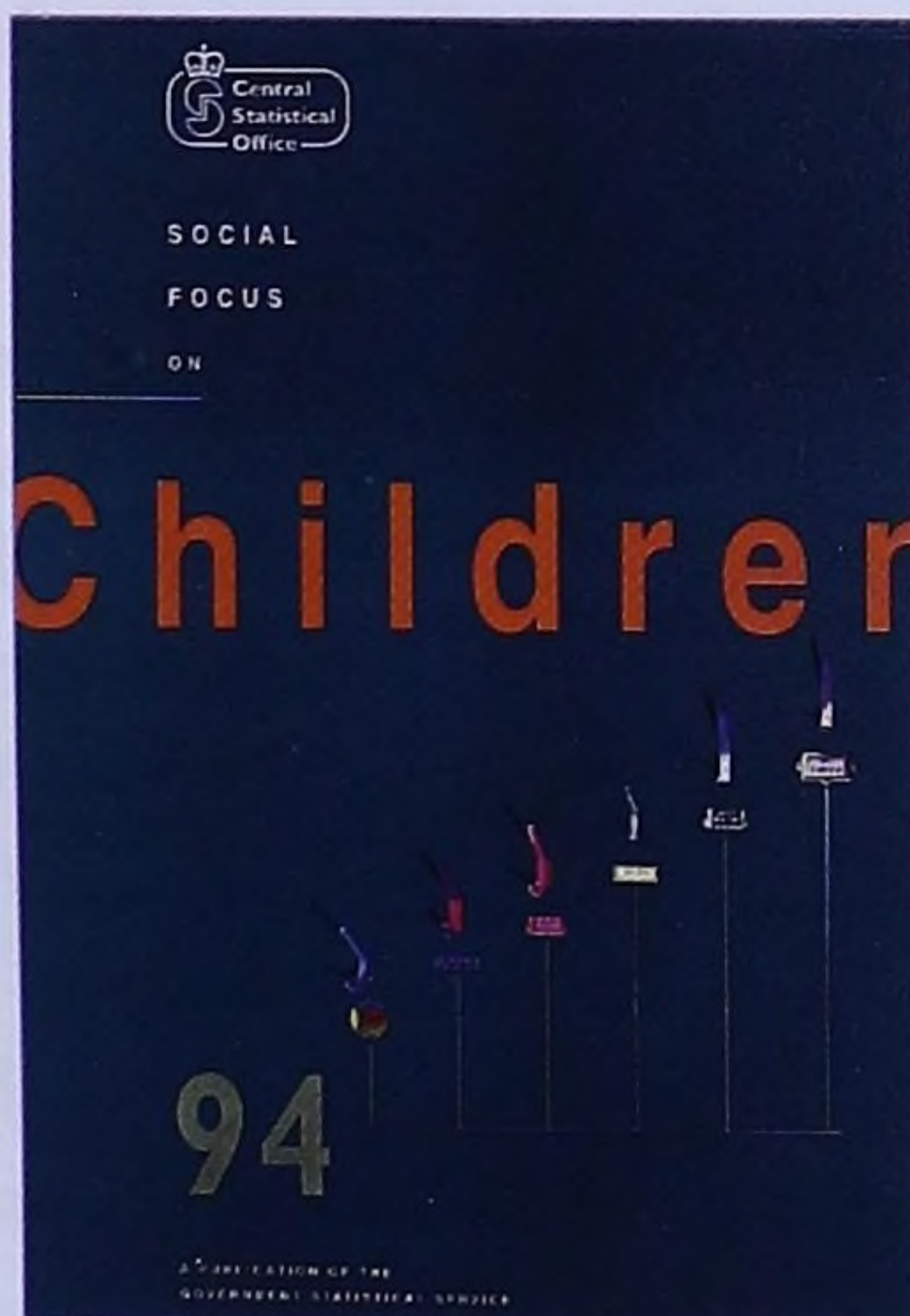
'The only source of its kind'

'Statistics on smaller areas would be useful'



REGIONAL TRENDS 29

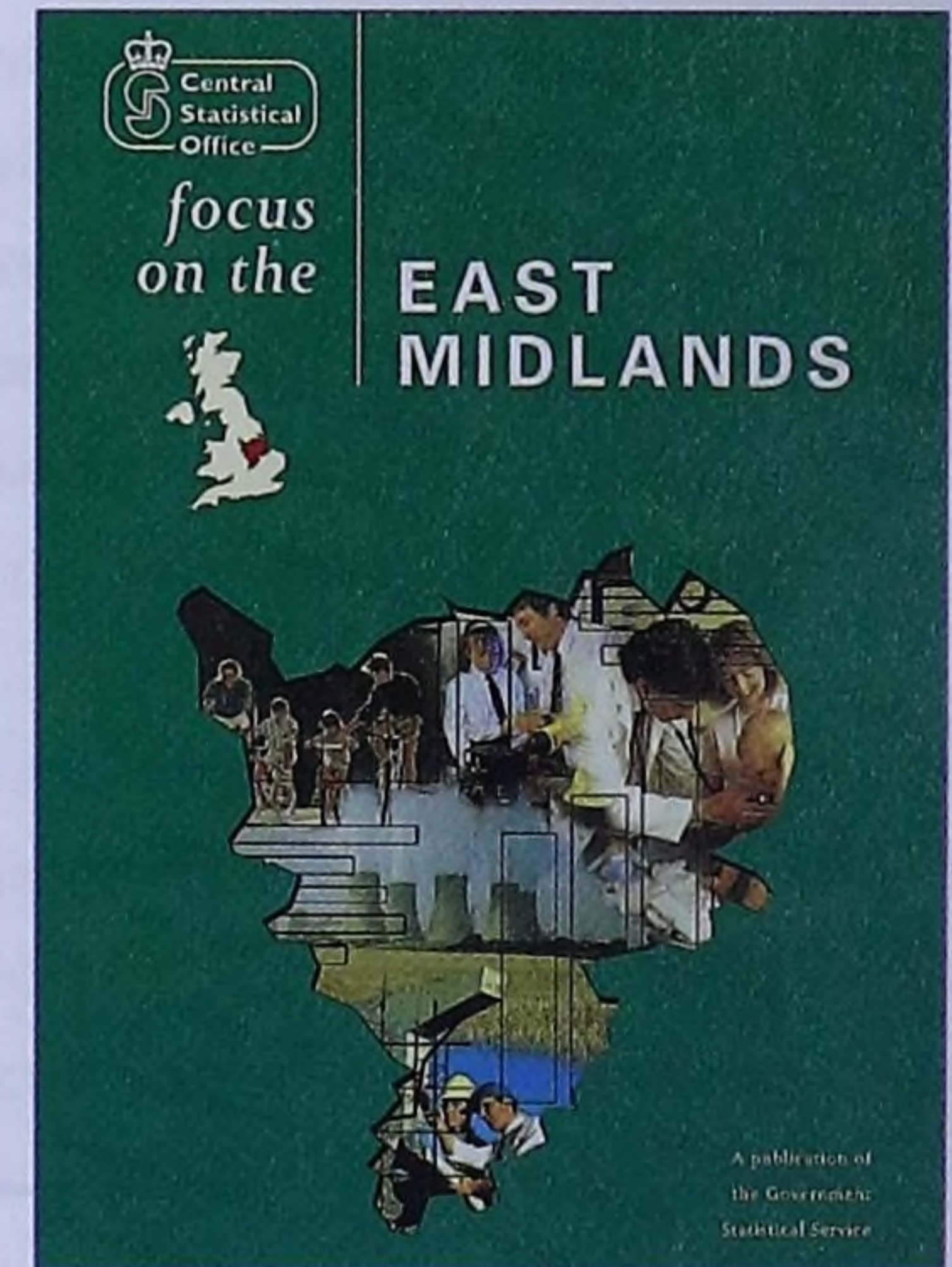
'With Social Trends, this is the most heavily used of all the government statistics which we purchase'



SOCIAL FOCUS ON CHILDREN

'It's great to see government and non-government data brought together in one publication which is easy to both access and use. Great value at £25'

'Make it cheaper!'



FOCUS ON THE EAST MIDLANDS

'A very accessible and digestible presentation of key data about the region - excellent value for money as a planning resource'

'Some tables and maps could be more detailed'

These are just some of the many and varied comments which were received as a result of a series of readership surveys in Social and Regional Statistics Division. These have taken place over the last couple of years and have provided an insight into what our users think of our books.

The surveys were carried out at different stages in the lives of the various publications. Both Social and Regional Trends are annual publications which



By Tim Harris

have been produced for many years whereas Social Focus on Children and Focus on the East Midlands were both the first editions in new series. Family Spending has also been produced for many years but the publication had undergone considerable change between the reports of the 1992 and the 1993 Family Expenditure Surveys. The readership surveys therefore gave us the opportunity to find out whether our established publications were still

meeting our users' needs and also to judge the potential of the two new series.

So far readers' views have been sought on five publications:

- ◆ **Social Trends** draws together a wide range of statistics to paint a broad picture of society. It is aimed at a wide audience including those involved in social policy, marketing, advertising, research, journalism and teaching. Sales are around 8,000 each year.
- ◆ **Regional Trends** provides a unique description of the regions of the United Kingdom through statistics from many sources. It is aimed at a similar audience to Social Trends and sells about 4,000 copies a year.
- ◆ **Family Spending** is the report of the Family Expenditure Survey and sells approximately 2,500.
- ◆ **Social Focus on Children** looks at what it is like to be a child in the United Kingdom. The Social Focus series complements the policy area approach of Social Trends by looking at different groups in society. This book was published in August 1994 and had sold 2,200 copies by the end of December 1995.
- ◆ **Focus on the East Midlands** is the first in a series which aims to meet the increasing demand for information on smaller geographical areas. It provides an insight into all aspects of life in the region and how it has changed over the last decade. Its audience is mainly the business community, local government and those in education and research. Published in March 1995 it had sold more than 800 copies by the end of the year.

HOW WERE THE SURVEYS CARRIED OUT?

The questionnaires for the first two readership surveys, Social Trends and Regional Trends, were sent directly to those on the HMSO standing order list. Each was accompanied by a letter from Jenny Church, the head of the division, outlining the reasons for the survey. Although this only sought the views of a section of our readers, it was thought that this personal approach would achieve a better response and be targeted at the more regular readers.

The method of conducting the surveys was different for the other publications - in the case of the two new series by necessity because there were no standing order lists. In these, the questionnaire was enclosed in the book along with a prepaid envelope. Various incentives were also used to encourage people to respond: for example a free computer disk of the data behind the charts and tables was offered to respondents to the Social Focus and Focus on the East Midlands surveys.

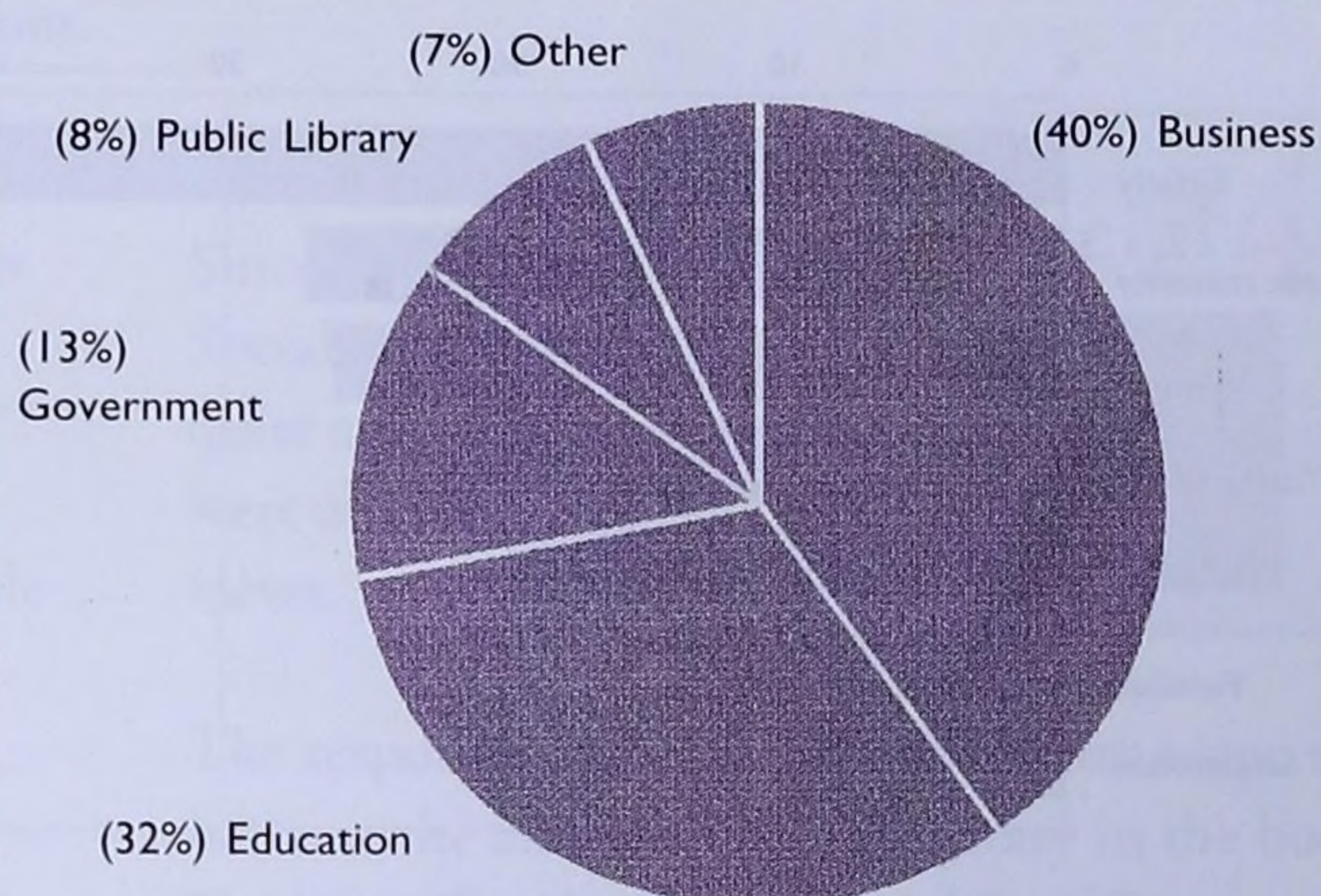
The number of people responding to the surveys was good. The surveys which were sent directly to those on the mailing list achieved a response rate of between 15 and 20 per cent while those with the form enclosed in the publication had response rates of between 7 and 11 per cent.

WHAT DID WE FIND OUT?

Education, business and government users and libraries made up the vast majority of those responding. **Chart 1** shows the types of users of Family Spending.

Chart 1: Family Spending Users

Percentages



Comparing the distribution of users among the five surveys is of limited value given the different methods used to distribute the questionnaires. However the Social and Regional Trends responses, which were both surveys of those on the HMSO lists, do show different results. The largest group of users of Regional Trends were those in central and local government: these made up about four in ten of those responding, with the majority being in local government. For Social Trends, education users were the largest group accounting for one in three respondents.

For Family Spending and Focus on the East Midlands, business users accounted for four in ten of those replying, with education users being the second largest group. These two sectors were also the largest groups of users of Social Focus, with the higher proportion being in education.

Around nine in ten of all the respondents described their copies of Social and Regional Trends and Family Spending as library copies. This indicates that the total number of readers of these publications is likely to be far higher than simply the number of copies sold.

Chart 2: Topics for Future Editions of Social Focus¹

Percentages



¹ Percentage of all respondents.

The surveys also gave some indication of how frequently each copy was referred to and how easy the publications were to use. They appear to be well used: Social Trends and Regional Trends were both used at least monthly in three quarters of cases and Family Spending in two thirds. Education and library users tended to refer to their copies more frequently than others, probably reflecting the fact that these are held in libraries where many people have access to them. The overwhelming majority found the publications easy to use with just a handful disagreeing with this.

We were also interested to see if we had the right balance between tables, charts and commentary. In both Family Spending and Regional Trends the amount of commentary had just been increased and we were keen to find out if this extra effort was worthwhile. The results showed that it was, with almost all the Regional Trends users saying that they found the text helpful. Family Spending readers generally thought that the amount of commentary and charts was about right, although around one in six said they would appreciate even more.

As the Social and Regional Focus series were both just starting the readership survey provided a good chance to gauge readers' reactions to these new series. For both of these publications the vast majority liked the balance between tables, charts and commentary.

Both the Focus publications were extremely well received by those buying them.

Almost everyone said that they would find the new Social Focus series useful and more than 80 per cent wanted information on how to subscribe to future editions. Most of the users of Focus on the East Midlands said they would buy an updated publication at some stage: more than 60 per cent would buy it each year, if it were available, and a further 30 per cent would buy it at least every three years.

The popularity of possible future topics for Social Focus could also be gauged. Chart 2 shows some of the groups people mentioned, the top four being elderly people, ethnic minorities, women and young adults.

Among users of Focus on the East Midlands, only around a third said that they would purchase similar publications for other regions. This probably reflects the fact that three quarters of those replying lived or worked in the East Midlands and this type of publication is bound to be more relevant to people in the region to which it relates. For those who said that they would be interested in other regions, the most popular choices for future editions were the

adjoining areas: West Midlands, East Anglia and Yorkshire and Humberside. Overall, one in six said they would be interested in purchasing the whole series for all regions in the United Kingdom.

Some useful information was also obtained for our marketing and sales division as the surveys gave respondents the opportunity to ask for information on future publications. This has helped build up a mailing list and enable advertising to be better targeted towards people who are likely to be interested in certain publications.

We were also able to find out how people had heard about the two Focus publications. More than half of the purchasers of Focus on the East Midlands had heard about it from an advertising leaflet; the remainder had heard from a variety of sources including the launch meeting, press, HMSO and colleagues.

The source from which most Social Focus readers had heard was the press - more than four in ten had heard from this source. This reflects the very good coverage which the book was given in the media when it was published. HMSO and CSO advertising were also common methods and together these also accounted for a further four in ten readers.

HAVE THINGS CHANGED AS A RESULT?

The main message which has come through is that, in general, the publications are well liked, easy to use and meeting the needs of the vast majority of our readers. However, as with everything, there is always room for improvement and there were many suggestions of additional information to include, items to drop, presentational changes to make and other ways of

improving our books. Some of the changes which have been made in each of the publications are shown below.

Social Trends

Since the readership survey, Social Trends has undergone quite a few changes, many were as a result of users' views.



The responses indicated that there was scope to increase the amount of commentary in the book. Traditionally, the text in Social Trends commented mainly on the data which are shown in the tables and charts. In the 1995 and 1996 editions this was expanded and additional background information was included, especially where this gave reasons for the patterns shown by the data.

There were many calls for more detailed data, especially the actual figures behind the charts. This is not possible within the current size of the book and to increase it would risk making the book less user friendly. A partial solution to this has been to make all the underlying data available on a computer disk which can be purchased by those who have bought the book. The most recent Social Trends CD-rom, for the 26th edition, also contains the data underlying all the charts.

The success of Social Trends is partly due to the fact that it is selective in the information it includes - it is intended as a first source of reference on a wide range of topics. To enable readers to find more detailed information, we have added a list of contact points and telephone numbers at the end of each chapter.

The frequency of reading each chapter gave some indication of the popularity of each of the topics. As a result the Participation chapter was disbanded with its important items redistributed among the other chapters, and the Crime and Justice chapter was reduced in length.

The inclusion of articles at the beginning of the book appears to be popular. This has led to them being retained, although we recognise that the limitations on space available for this sort of material in an annual publication mean that we cannot meet the demand for such articles.

Regional Trends

The 1994 edition of Regional Trends had seen the introduction of some explanatory text at the beginning of each chapter.

The readership survey confirmed that almost all users found this text helpful and so despite the additional resources required to produce this it was decided to retain a similar amount.

Improvements to the index were suggested by some users. In particular they felt that it was not clear which statistics were available at a sub-regional level. This issue will be addressed in the 1996 edition.

Family Spending

As with Regional Trends, Family Spending 1993 contained more commentary compared with previous editions. This was liked by the majority of readers and there were indications that there was demand to

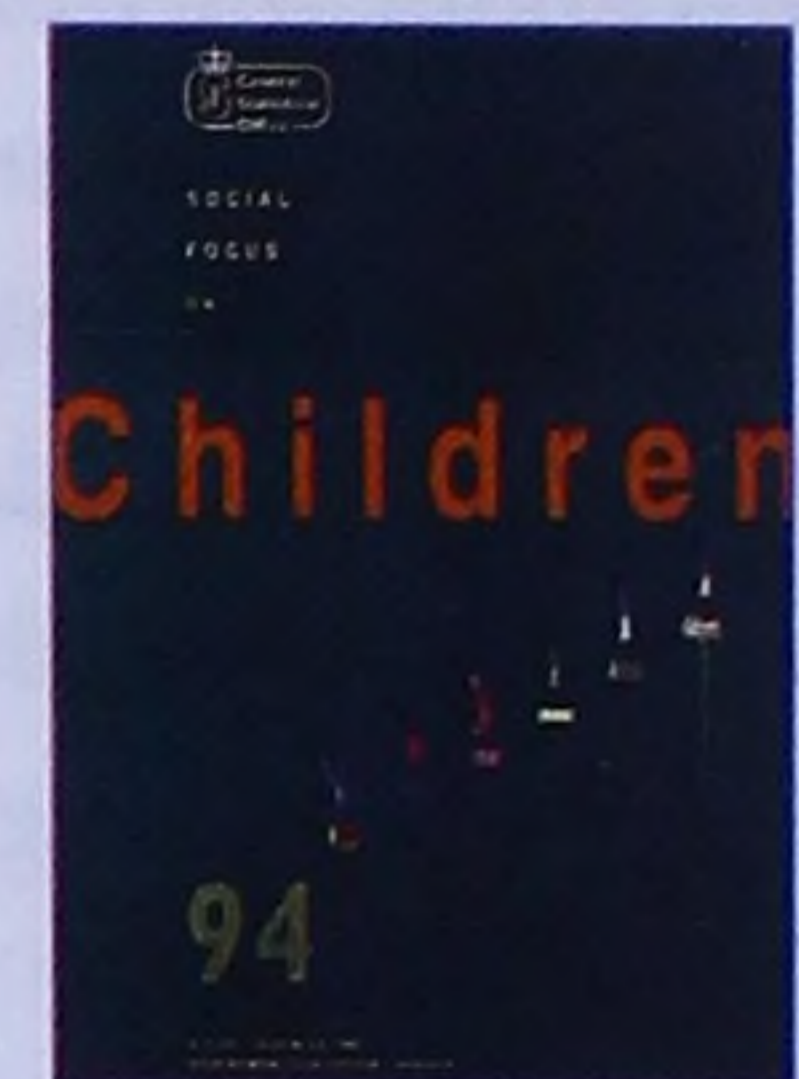


increase both the amount of text and the number of charts in future editions. As a result the amount of introductory text and charts increased from two pages to four pages for most chapters in the report of the 1994-95 survey.

There were many requests for more regional and small area data. Unfortunately it is not possible to provide more detailed information due to the limitations of the sample size. However a new table showing expenditure analysed by type of area (metropolitan/non-metropolitan, high/medium/low population density) was introduced.

Social Focus on Children

One thing which Social Focus on Children lacked was an index and many readers pointed this out. This was remedied in the next edition.



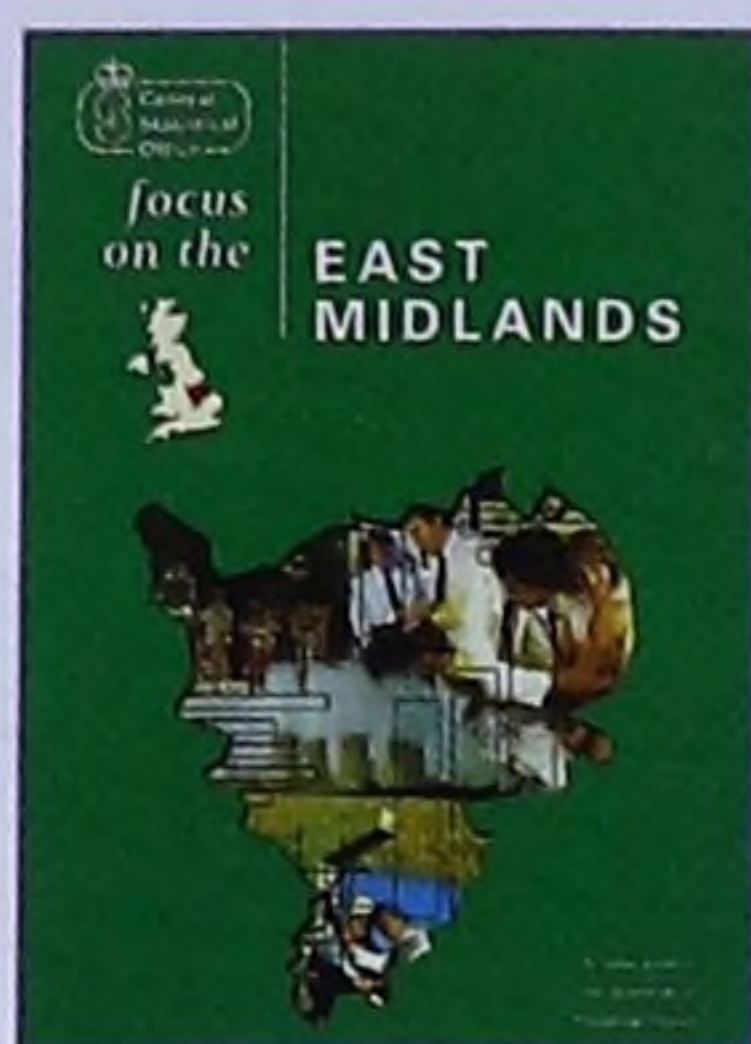
The use of colour was also commented on. Many users wanted to photocopy parts of the book and the shades of blue and red proved to be particularly unsuitable for this. Blue and red have continued to be used for Social Focus but the shades have been made darker to minimise this problem.

As with Social Trends, many readers use Social Focus as a first point of reference. Contact points and telephone numbers were introduced for the second edition.

The subject of future editions has been determined, in part at least, by the results of the survey. The second edition covered Women and Ethnic Minorities is the topic currently being prepared for publication in August this year.

Focus on the East Midlands

Following the success of the East Midlands edition, a Focus on London is being prepared. This is being produced in partnership with the Government Office for London and the London Research Centre and is planned to be published towards the end of the year. The Welsh Office and Northern Ireland Office will shortly be publishing similar books covering their own areas.



Editions covering the other regions in England may be produced in partnership with the Government Offices. If these go ahead, they will take on board the readership survey results. In particular the colour of the type is being reviewed and an expanded section on education is being considered.

CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS

After a couple of years of changes to the style and content of Social Trends, another readership survey is currently being carried out to gauge their success or otherwise. In the five weeks following the publication of this year's edition we

have received around 130 responses. No detailed analysis has yet been carried out on these but a few points have already emerged.

Once again the vast majority of respondents are very positive about the publication. Aspects on which people have particularly commented include the improved presentation and the index, which appears to one of the most well used parts of the book.

Several readers have also asked for data showing more continuous trends; this is an issue which will be addressed as part of the wider agenda within the Office for National Statistics.

If you have any comments about any of the publications of Social and Regional Statistics Division *please write to:*

Tim Harris
Social and Regional Statistics
Room 1804
Millbank Tower
Millbank
London
SW1P 4QQ

A SEMINAR ON FINANCIAL DATA



By Edward Hayman

Sector Accounts (FISA) Division invited a group of its customers to a presentation of its products and a

discussion of their requirements. The result was a valuable exchange and an enjoyable diversion from formal business communications.

BACKGROUND

This article describes the seminar FISA Division held for its customers on 25 January 1996. The seminar was conceived in the heady atmosphere of a divisional "Awayday" in August 1995. Our project started with a team of nine, representing all five branches of the division and most of the grades within it. The members of the team are listed at Annex A. Elizabeth Hofmann was the original co-ordinator but handed this role to me when she started a career break in November 1995.

INTRODUCTION

What happens when a CSO division is "at home" to its customers for a few hours? Financial Institutions and



David Shawyer John Bickell Natu Patel George Ruth Edward Hayman Ann Harris

The idea of this project was to answer the question "Our customers - who are they and what do they want?". There were clearly different customers for different divisional products and, presumably, some who were interested in more than one product. The aim of the seminar was to give them all an overview of our work so that they would become more aware of the

background and might learn of products they had not previously known about. We also wanted to find out what currently unmet demands existed for other products which we

might supply. We collected a comprehensive list of all customers known to the division and took advice about others who might be interested. We selected 40 people from outside the CSO to invite; 21 came. The list of organisations they represented is at Annex B.

A "LOCAL" SEMINAR

These days nobody in ONS would deny the importance of identifying our customers, keeping in touch with them and ensuring that we know what their needs are. Some might argue that this is the job of Marketing and Sales (MS) Division. We felt there was a case for taking a "local" initiative, partly because we could concentrate on

a manageable subset of CSO products and clientele; partly because direct contact between producer and consumer appeared a good way of generating the discussion of unmet needs that was an important part of our plan. It is arguable that MS Division could have organised the seminar and achieved the same results by using FISA Division's knowledge of its customers to produce the invitation list and FISA statisticians to take the seminar. In the event, we organised it ourselves, obtaining advice and help from MS Division, notably the Graphic Design Unit, and assistance from Alan Hewer, CSO's computer Databank manager, who came along to demonstrate Navidata.

The project team found the organisation a rewarding challenge. It is possible that, as a "local" production, the seminar had a home-made flavour it would otherwise have lacked. This may or may not have been an advantage. What is not in doubt is that it paid off to deal at a divisional level with the "local" issues that affected, and were of interest to, our customers. The seminar topic of "financial statistics" was broad enough to enable most of the participants to meet new ideas and new people; narrow enough for most of what went on to be of interest to everyone. Our guests welcomed the direct contact with the producers of the statistics.

THE SEMINAR FORMAT

The seminar started at 11.30 on 25 January. The programme is at Annex C. On arrival, each visitor was given a folder containing a list of FISA products and contact points, as well as the

Organisations outside the CSO represented at the Seminar:

Association of British Insurers
Association of Unit Trusts and Investment Funds
Bank of England
British Bankers Association
British Invisibles
Building Societies Commission
Department of Trade
Finance and Leasing Association
Institutional Fund Managers Association
Investment Management Regulatory Organisation Ltd
Nikko Europe plc
Robert Fleming and Co
Royal Bank of Scotland
UBS Asset Management (London) Ltd

programme, product samples and an assessment sheet. (Copies of these may be obtained from Natu Patel, tel: 0171-270 6182.) The meeting was chaired by Margaret Dolling and introduced by Pam Walker, the Head of Division. Adèle Barklem presented an overview of the division's work: its place in the CSO organisation; the main work areas; the sources of data - the surveys, survey methods and institutions surveyed; the publications and other statistical products. Neil Badger then led a discussion of future developments, inviting our guests to enlarge on their requirements but warning of the resource limitations which may restrict us. The formal seminar continued with a wide-ranging exchange of views. Our customers told us what they did and did not like about our products and what more they wished for. Informal contacts between the producers of our statistics and the consumers carried on during the buffet lunch

Seminar Programme

CSO Financial Institutions and Sector Accounts

Seminar on Financial Data - 25 January 1996

Room 47/2 Government Offices, Great George Street, London

- 11.00** Registration and coffee
- 11.30** Opening *Margaret Dolling (Chair)*
- 11.35** Introduction *Pam Walker*
- 11.40** Key products and the division's work
- areas of work
- sources, enquiries
- objectives *Adèle Barklem*
- 12.00** Questions
- 12.10** Discussion of future developments
led by *Neil Badger*
Views are invited on:
- further data required
- a different timescale for current data
- other developments that would be valuable
- 12.35** Round-up *Pam Walker*
- 12.45** Buffet lunch

However, some customers emphasised the burden of official surveys when combined with other calls for information, either from supervisory bodies or private data agencies. Some supported private information collection and appropriate charging. They also urged the use of common definitions by surveying bodies.

CSO referred to the various international for a in which the UK was working to develop such information. The UK was playing a leading role in the establishment of common definitions and classifications. It was important that these should be consistent internationally.

2. SPECIFIC GAPS IN PUBLISHED DATA

Remaining financial institutions (other than banks, building societies, life assurance and pension funds).

SUMMARY OF MAIN ISSUES RAISED

1. GENERAL DEVELOPMENT OF FINANCIAL STATISTICS

The customers identified a need to measure how well the UK financial services industry performed, in terms of output and net trade, compared with other countries' financial industries and with other industries in the UK. This is becoming increasingly important because of the liberalisation of trade in services driven by GATT and the EU single market. It could only be achieved by greater attention to financial statistics on the bases of industry categories, products and geographical markets.

The customers suggested that there were significant gaps in detailed statistics published on remaining financial institutions, notably for the securities dealers industry.

CSO pointed out that the securities industry was not neatly reflected in the sector boundaries imposed by international statistical classifications for national accounts. CSO could publish separately its figures for security dealers not covered by other sectors such as banks. We would need to consider whether the usefulness of doing this would be outweighed by the confusion caused.

◆ Personal savings market information

The customers spoke of the widespread interest in figures measuring the household savings market. They considered that this concept had not been satisfactorily covered in official data. CSO should take the lead in defining and measuring it.

CSO said National Expenditure and Income Division were looking into the possibility of expanding the current consumers' expenditure Business Monitor into a more comprehensive coverage of personal sector data, with the emphasis on the household sector. It would largely re-package data already available. The quality of personal sector data was still a problem but improvements were being made via eg the Share Register Survey.

There was a discussion about data on PEPs (number of accounts, number of holders, amounts invested) and personal pensions. CSO felt the interest was unlikely to justify adding questions to CSO enquiries, but users' views would be sought in the course of developing the content of "Consumer Trends".

◆ Personal sector interest rates

Following on from point 2b, the customers emphasised the lack of data on bank, building society and National Savings interest rates.

CSO pointed out that National Savings and some representative building society rates were already published. Publication of representative interest rates for banks has been discussed between the banks and the Bank of England but has so far been deferred in recognition of the banks' sensitivities about the way the data might

be used. The possibility was considered of including interest series compiled by the British Bankers Association in "Financial Statistics".

◆ Life assurance and pension funds

Customers would like further analysis of life assurance and pension fund business. Requests were made for the separation of personal pensions business and assets from life business (item 2b) and the separate identification of assets of defined benefit and defined contribution pension schemes.

◆ Gilt-edged

According to the customers, there was not enough information on British government security holdings by sector. They would like a monthly sectoral analysis and more information on holdings analysed by maturity-band. CSO will consider whether we can deploy existing maturity band information more effectively.

◆ Derivatives

Customers stressed the importance of measuring the derivatives trade in view of the enormous exposures which could build up, but acknowledged it was difficult.

CSO pointed out that the 1995 European System of Accounts recognised derivatives as separate instruments. From 1998 we would be required to measure them. There had already been a one-off global survey (organised by the Bank of England). Agreement on harmonised definitions was needed to build on this.

3. IMPROVEMENTS TO PUBLICATIONS

Customers queried whether there was a demand for a higher-profile publication on the financial accounts and balance-sheets.

CSO referred to the “UK Economic Accounts” (the quarterly supplement to “Economic Trends”) and the recent improvements to its sector accounts commentary. Feedback would be welcome.

Customers would like time-series tables in “Financial Statistics” to go back further. They felt that the layout of this publication allowed room for longer runs of data. They still needed hard-copy format.

CSO said they would consider adjusting the “Financial Statistics” tables.

4. TRAINING

Customers suggested there was a market for national accounts courses (half-day) for CSO’s customers, suppliers and trade associations.

CONCLUSION

This was a worth-while initiative in public relations at the divisional level. We had an opportunity to explain our work directly to our customers. They had an opportunity to voice their opinions of our work and discuss their priorities for future developments. They made a number of important and interesting points.

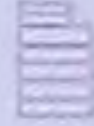
We also benefited from the chance to work in a team with colleagues from different branches. The division is a new one, combining branches previously in separate divisions and still in separate buildings. The experience helped to make us all feel like members of one division.

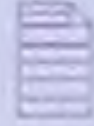
Informal feedback on the day and returns of assessment sheets confirmed our view that the seminar worked well and will be worth doing again.

I would like to acknowledge my debt to David Shawyer and the others who provided the notes on the discussion, and to the whole project team for a rewarding experience.

LIST OF FISA PRODUCTS AND CONTACT POINTS

Main Publications:

 **ONS First Release:**
Institutional Investment First Release
Contact point - Neil Badger ☎ 0171 217 4388

 **Business Monitors:**
Insurance Companies’ and Pension Funds’ Investment (MQ5)
Contact point - Ann Harris ☎ 0171 217 4253

Assets and Liabilities of Finance Houses and other Credit Companies (SDQ7)
Contact point - Neil Badger ☎ 0171 217 4388

Financial Statistics
Financial Statistics Explanatory Handbook:
Contact point - Natu Patel ☎ 0171 270 6182

Other HMSO Publications using FISA Data:

- ☰ United Kingdom National Accounts
(The Blue Book)
- ☰ United Kingdom Balance of Payments
(The Pink Book)
- ☰ Economic Trends
- ☰ UK Economic Accounts
(A Quarterly Supplement to Economic Trends)
- ☰ Key Data United Kingdom Business & Social Statistics
- ☰ Monthly Digest of Statistics
- ☰ Annual Abstract of Statistics
- ☰ Social Trends

Contact point:

London Inquiry service.
☎ 0171 270 6363/6364

To find out more about or to purchase any of CSO's statistical publications, contact:

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ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF INDUSTRY AND OCCUPATION CODING

INTRODUCTION

An exercise was undertaken to assess the quality of Industry and Occupation Coding in the annual New Earnings Survey, which is based on a one per cent sample of employees who are covered by PAYE Schemes. The sample size is potentially around 210,000, although the achieved sample size is around 160,000 (since around 7% of employees are outside the scope of the survey, around 11% cannot be traced because the employer has closed or they have recently changed jobs, and around 6% do not respond). Questionnaires are sent to employers to collect information

on hours of work, the components of earnings, the job title and what the employee does, and the main business activity. Sex and birthdate are obtained from registers. Images of the forms are stored in a Document Image Processing (DIP) system and the data from these are captured using Optical Character Recognition (OCR). Clerical staff then code the job descriptions to occupation and the business activity to industry, using the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) and the Standard Industrial Classification



by Paul Keech and Terry Orchard (not pictured)



Document Image Processing

(SIC) systems respectively. Included on the forms is a question asking if the employee was in the same job one year ago. As a result the occupation and industry codes of the 70% of respondents who were in the same job the previous year are carried forward.

In 1993 the accuracy of the industry and occupation codes was checked and it was found that about 10% of the codes were incorrect. It was decided to repeat the exercise in 1994 and at the same time to

assess the extent to which the errors were due to the question about the same job one year ago rather than the coding of occupation and

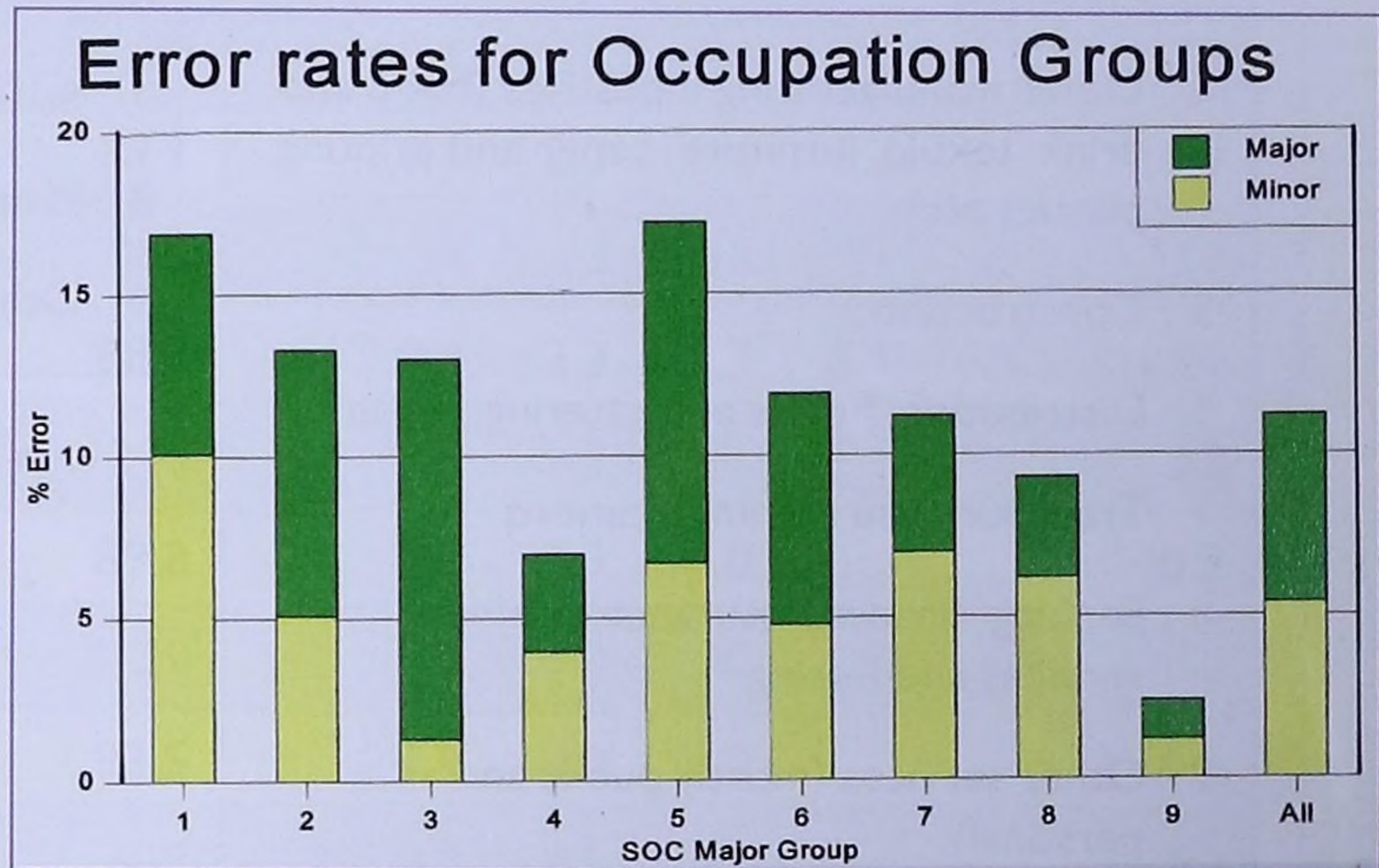
industry from the descriptions. It was hoped that the exercise would provide information that could be used to improve the quality of occupation and industry coding in similar surveys.

HOW THE EXERCISE WAS CARRIED OUT

A sample of around 1,000 questionnaires was selected as the first 1,000 with a sample number that ended in the digits "01". These were examined using the images stored in the DIP system. The retrieval, using sample number, was thus quick and easy. The exercise was carried out by 10 experienced coders who each reviewed the codes on around 100 questionnaires. The occupation and industry codes were scored for correctness using the following system:

"CORRECTNESS SCORE"	SOC	SIC
0	Correct(OK)	Correct(OK)
1	Unit wrong, Minor OK	Activity wrong, Group OK
2	Minor wrong, Major OK	Group wrong, Class OK
3	Major wrong	Class wrong, Division OK

All questionnaires where there was a difference between the code assigned by the reviewer and that on the record were coded again by another person. Where this resulted in yet another code, the result was decided by an arbitration panel. The dual coding of all 1,000 questionnaires was considered but it was decided that there were insufficient resources available to do so.



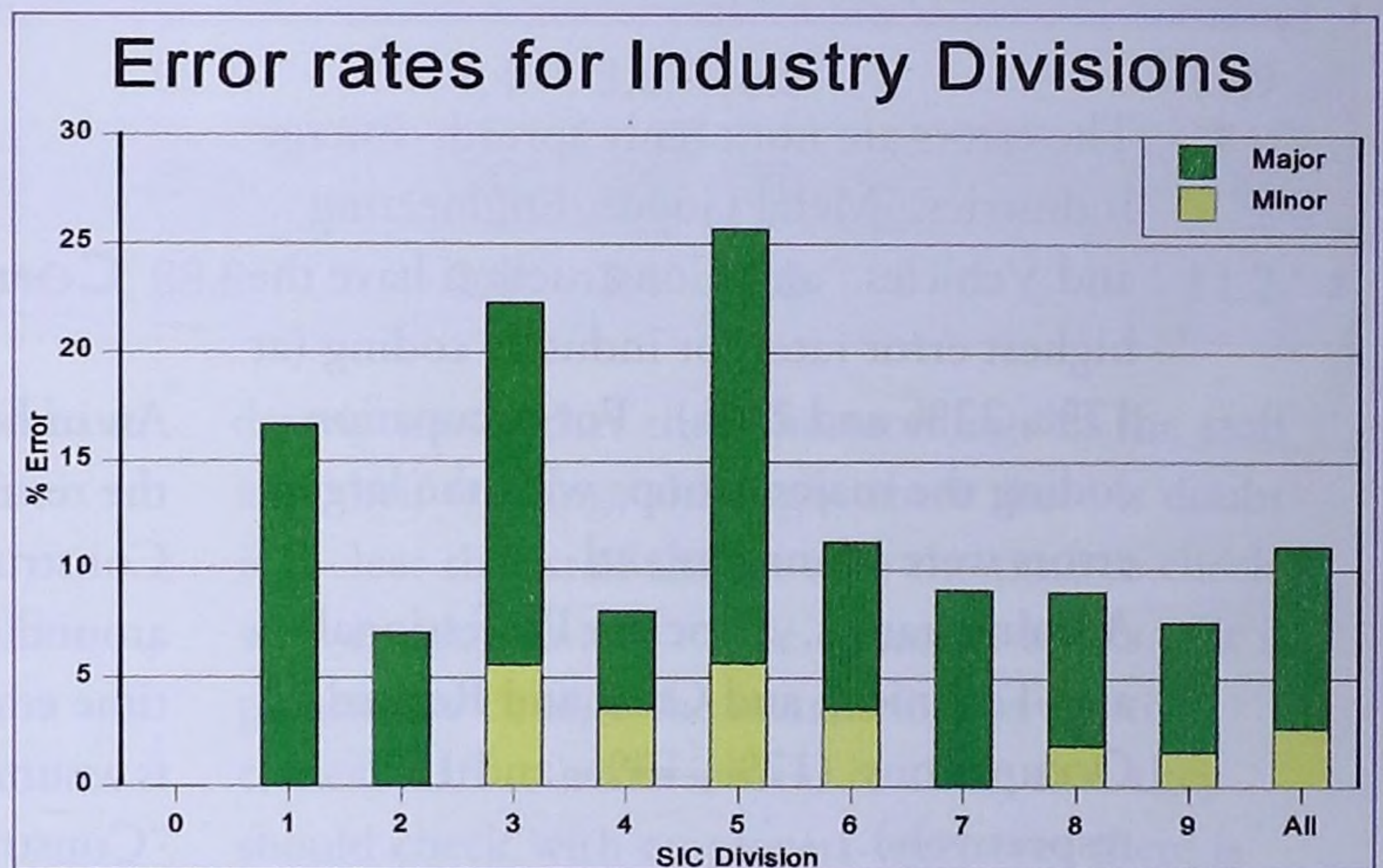
SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The results of the exercise were that:

- ◆ The error rates were around 10% for both occupation and industry coding. This was true for the coding in 1994 and the codes carried forward from earlier years.

- ◆ Carrying forward codes was not a major source of error.

The error rate for the question about the same job last year was around 4%. The consequential error rates of the carried forward codes were both very high, at 30% for industry and 50% for occupation. However, these errors accounted for only around 11% of the



incorrect industry codes and around 14% of the incorrect occupation codes.

- ◆ Dual coding, that is another person recoding the descriptions, reduces the errors but by too little (around 1%) to be cost effective.

INDUSTRY (SIC(80)) DIVISION

- 0 Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
- 1 Energy and water supply industries
- 2 Extraction of minerals and ores other than fuels; manufacture of metals, mineral products and chemicals
- 3 Metal goods, engineering and vehicle industries
- 4 Other manufacturing industries (Food and drink, textile, furniture, paper and printing, plastics etc)
- 5 Construction
- 6 Distribution, hotels and catering; repairs
- 7 Transport and communications
- 8 Banking, finance, insurance, business services and leasing
- 9 Other services (mostly public and personal)

- ◆ The errors are not evenly spread. Energy Industries, Metal Goods, Engineering and Vehicles, and Construction have the highest error rates for industry coding (at 17%, 22% and 26%). For occupation coding the major groups with the largest errors were Managers and Administrators, Associate Professionals and Technical, and Craft and Related Occupations (17%, 13%, and 17% respectively).
- ◆ The errors result mainly from imprecise descriptions that the staff found difficult to understand. It is thought that the error rates could be reduced if the staff had sufficient time to telephone employers and to use reference books more widely.

OCCUPATION (SOC) MAJOR GROUPS

- 1 Managers and Administrators
- 2 Professional occupations
- 3 Associate Professional and Technical occupations
- 4 Clerical and Secretarial occupations
- 5 Craft and related occupations
- 6 Personal and protective service occupations
- 7 Sales occupations
- 8 Plant and machine operatives
- 9 Other occupations

- ◆ The errors in occupation and industry coding were largely unrelated with only around 2% of questionnaires having both occupation and industry wrongly coded. (80% of the records had both occupation and industry correct, 9% had an error in industry only, and 9% an error in occupation only).

CONSEQUENTIAL ERRORS IN RESULTS

An indication of the effect of coding errors on the results can be obtained by looking at Construction which had a major error rate of around 20%. The average weekly earnings of full time employees in 1994 were around £320. If it is assumed that 20% of those coded to "Construction" should have been in "Other Manufacturing", which had average weekly earnings of £300, the "true" average earnings of "Construction" would be £325. Thus the 20% coding error has resulted in an error of £5 (around 1%) in average earnings. This is about the same as sampling errors and thus it is safe to conclude that coding errors have no more effect on the results than do sampling errors.

TABLE I - DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CODING BY CODING AND PERMANENT STAFF

	CODED	TOTAL	CORRECT	"CORRECTNESS SCORES"				TOTAL INCORRECT
				1	2	3	4	
SIC	Casual	270	238	3	9	8	12	32
	%		88.1	1.1	3.3	3.0	4.4	11.9
	Permanent	30	27	0	0	1	2	3
	%		90.0	0.0	0.0	3.3	6.7	10.0
	Carry Forward	696	620	1	14	24	37	76
	%		89.1	0.1	2.0	3.4	5.3	10.9
	All	996	885	4	23	33	51	111
	%		88.9	0.4	2.3	3.3	5.1	11.1
SOC	Casual	274	246	8	9	11		28
	%		89.8	2.9	3.3	4.0		10.2
	Permanent	31	29	2	0	0		2
	%		93.5	6.5	0.0	0.0		6.5
	Carry Forward	691	609	10	25	47		82
	%		88.1	1.4	3.6	6.8		11.9
	All	996	884	20	34	58		112
	%		88.8	2.0	3.4	5.8		11.2

It should be noted that coding errors would have a greater effect on estimates of numbers of employees in the industry and occupation groups. For these, 20% coding errors could mean 20% errors in the estimates.

CONCLUSIONS

(1) The error rates in coding occupation and industry for the New Earnings Survey were around 10%. The error rates of permanent clerical staff were slightly lower than for the casual staff, who are employed only for the 4 month processing period. (see Table 1) The problems in accurate coding are due to imprecise

descriptions rather than shortcomings in the staff and their training, although where there is doubt it is clear that staff should take the time to check with employers and to use reference books. (It is planned to change the instructions given to clerical staff to make it clear to them that they should check with employers whenever there is doubt about the interpretation of the descriptions on the questionnaires. However, it must be recognised that this takes time and for the past two years the emphasis has been on completing the processing on time.)

(2) Coding errors have no greater effect on the accuracy of the NES results than do sampling errors.

WHERE HAVE ALL THE HOURS GONE? MEASURING TIME USE IN THE UK



*by Mike Koudra, Jenny Church and Linda Murgatroyd,
Social and Regional Statistics Division, Office for National Statistics*

INTRODUCTION

How people spend their time has important implications for public policy. This is particularly true during a period of major social change affecting employment, social security and other aspects of daily life. Users and producers of official statistics are increasingly aware of the limitations of monetary measures of output and there is growing interest in other indicators of activity, such as time use, which can throw light on changes in the 'informal economy'. They can also provide a unified conceptual framework for analysing a range of policy issues.

Time use research has a long history in other countries with studies carried out both in the USA and Europe in the inter-war years. Official, large-scale time use surveys have been carried out in several European countries, some with a long history, eg. in France, Germany and the Netherlands. Where it is available, time use data can and has been used to extend economic analyses and to inform and monitor social policies. For instance, it can and has been used to measure unpaid work (eg. in family businesses, for informal exchange with other households, or in voluntary activities in and for the household). It can thus contribute to extending national accounts, eg through satellite accounts for

household production; to monitoring the broad size and trends in the black economy; and be used for other modelling purposes. It also provides a unitary framework through which a range of social policies can be addressed, as well as detailed information of value in specific policy areas, such as leisure and culture participation, transport, education, training and employment and policies on the elderly, the family and gender inequalities.

The United Kingdom however has not had such a strong tradition in this field of research, although there have been a number of studies carried out by academic researchers, or in the guise of audience research. Since the 1950s the BBC, for example, have used diary information to help target programming at particular social groups. However, the potential of this type of data is beginning to be recognised, and work is now under way to explore the case for carrying out the first large-scale official survey of time use in the UK.

THE ESSEX UNIVERSITY SURVEY

Recent research by the ESRC Research Centre on Microsocial Change, commissioned by the Office for National Statistics, gives some useful statistical pointers on how people spend their time and how this varies by groups. It also provides valuable insight into the methodological issues facing researchers in this field.

The aim of the Essex project was to develop a time use instrument suitable for use as an add-on component to other surveys, without unduly burdening respondents. Following pre-testing, a



six page booklet was developed with brief instructions and a day schedule broken down into 15 minute intervals and 30 precoded activities, designed for both self-response and interviewer completion.

The instrument was tested as part of the May 1995 OPCS Omnibus Survey. Over 2,000 Omnibus respondents were asked to provide details of their activities on a designated day, normally the day previous to the interview. This produced a small but nationally representative dataset, providing useful information per se and demonstrating that a cheap, light instrument of this kind could be made to work.

METHODOLOGY

A number of specific methodological points arose from the Essex Study; these are summarised below:

- ◆ The mean time taken by respondents to complete the time diary was 8.5 minutes, with those aged 60 or over taking longer

on average than younger people. On average the form took slightly longer when the interviewer completed it.

- ◆ Those aged 60 or over found it more difficult to remember what they did but this did not affect their assessment of the accuracy of their recall. In general a longer recall period seemed to make it harder to remember activities and reduced respondents' confidence in the accuracy of the recall but age did not affect these results.
- ◆ Four fifths of the time diaries had no missing data. There were fewer gaps in diaries if forms were completed by interviewers than by respondents themselves .
- ◆ The incidence of multiple activities (simultaneous or overlapping) was relatively small (4.8% of forms) so this is not a problem for the majority of respondents.

TABLE 1 - TIME USE BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS AND GENDER
GREAT BRITAIN MAY 1995

HOURS	IN FULL-TIME EMPLOYMENT		IN PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT		RETIRED		All
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	
<i>Weekly hours spent on:</i>							
Sleep	57	58	62	60	67	66	61
Free time	34	31	48	32	59	52	40
Work, study and travel	53	48	28	26	3	4	32
Housework, cooking and shopping	7	15	12	26	15	17	15
Eating, personal hygiene and caring	13	13	13	21	15	17	15
Household maintenance and pet care	4	2	6	3	9	3	4
<i>Free time per weekday</i>	4	4	6	4	8	7	5
<i>Free time per weekend day</i>	8	6	8	6	10	8	8

KEY RESULTS

Table 1 shows how the overall pattern of time use varies with employment status. Men in full-time work spent 53 hours a week on either work, travel or study, five hours more than women in full-time work. However, women in full-time employment spent eight hours more than their male counterparts on housework, cooking and

shopping each week. This results in men in full-time employment having around two hours more of free time at weekends than women in full-time work. The presence of dependent children reduces the amount of free time by around 10% for men and 20% for women.

TABLE 2 - TIME USE, ALL WORKING FULL-TIME, HOURS PER WEEK
GREAT BRITAIN MAY 1995

	SLEEP TOILET	UNPAID WORK, CARE	PAID WORK	LEISURE	SLEEP TOILET	UNPAID WORK CARE	PAID WORK	LEISURE
Family Status:								
not parent	68	19	44	37	70	23	40	36
youngest child under 5 years	68	25	43	33	67	46	32	24
youngest child under 16 years	67	22	43	36	68	34	37	28
Mean	68	20	44	36	69	28	38	33

Table 2 shows the different patterns of time use among men and women in full-time employment, indicating the burden of unpaid work or care still falls disproportionately on women. It shows that women in full-time employment spent slightly more time than men on paid work, unpaid work and care combined: 66 hours per week compared with 64 hours per week. However, among those with young children the gap between men and women widens substantially with women spending 77

hours per week on these activities and men 68 hours. Even among full-time workers without dependent children, however, women spent far more hours per week than men on unpaid work. Overall, women working full-time spent less time on paid work than men but this was more than compensated for by unpaid work and care. Time spent sleeping did not vary much between the genders but women's leisure time was squeezed considerably more than men's

TABLE 3 - USE OF FREE TIME BY AGE

GREAT BRITAIN MAY 1995

HOURS PER WEEK	AGE (YEARS)					
	16-24	25-34	35-44	45-59	60 AND OVER	ALL AGED 16 AND OVER
Television or Radio	14	15	13	17	26	19
Visiting Friends (1)	7	5	4	4	4	5
Reading	1	1	2	3	6	3
Talking, socialising and telephoning friends	3	3	3	4	4	3
Eating and drinking out	6	4	4	4	2	3
Hobbies, games and computing	2	2	1	3	3	2
Walks and other recreation	2	2	1	2	3	2
Doing nothing (may include illness)	1	1	1	2	2	2
Sports participation	3	1	1	1	1	1
Other	2	2	1	1	1	1
All free time	40	37	33	40	52	42

(1) This may include eating.

When people do get free time, they spend it in different ways. **Table 3** shows that the most common use of free time is watching television or listening to the radio, averaging 19 hours a week. Those aged 60 or over spent more time on these activities than younger people. However, this only includes the time spent watching

television or listening to the radio when they were not doing anything else simultaneously. The 16-24 age group spent the most time on eating or drinking out and those aged 60 or over spent the least. However, time spent on reading increases with age.

A UK TIME USE SURVEY

Eurostat (the statistical office of the European Communities) plans to hold a time use survey in 1997-8, in which ONS is currently considering participating, with a pilot survey in 1996-7. It would be the first large-scale time use survey in the UK. Considerable methodological work has been undertaken over the past few years in preparation for this survey by among others Statistics Sweden, the national statistical institute of Sweden, on commission from Eurostat.

The proposal for the pilot survey is that household members aged 10 years or over will keep a diary arranged into 10 minute slots. Unlike the Essex Study, the activities will not be pre-coded but described in the respondent's own words. This allows a wider range of activities to be described which can be coded in different ways for different purposes, enhancing the applications of the data. However, this also leads to greater coding costs. Main and secondary activities will be recorded and approximately 130 activities coded. The main groups of activities to be included are:

- ◆ personal care, *eg sleep, eating and washing*
- ◆ gainful employment, *eg regular work, training, travel at work and job seeking*
- ◆ study, *eg classes/lecture, homework and courses*
- ◆ food preparation, *eg meals and snack*
- ◆ household upkeep, *eg cleaning*
- ◆ making and care of clothes, *eg laundry, textiles and handicrafts*
- ◆ gardening and pet care
- ◆ construction, repairs and maintenance, *eg house, vehicles and equipment.*
- ◆ shopping and services, *eg consumer goods, durables, admin. and medical services*
- ◆ household management

- ◆ child care
- ◆ adult care

Diaries will be accompanied by a questionnaire to collect core classificatory data on households and individuals comparable with other major household surveys. The household questionnaire will be conducted in a face to face interview with a household representative, the questionnaire for individuals will either be completed in connection with the interview or left behind for respondents to complete. The diary will be filled in by respondents for two days, chosen randomly.

The final objective is to launch a fully-fledged survey time use survey with a sample of 5,000 households in each participating country. This would yield a wealth of information which could contribute to a wide range of economic models and social and economic policies.

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Essex data have been deposited at the:

ESRC Data Archive, University of Essex
Wivenhoe Park, Colchester
Essex, CO4 3SQ
☎ 01206 873333

Information about the planned Eurostat Time Use Survey is available from:

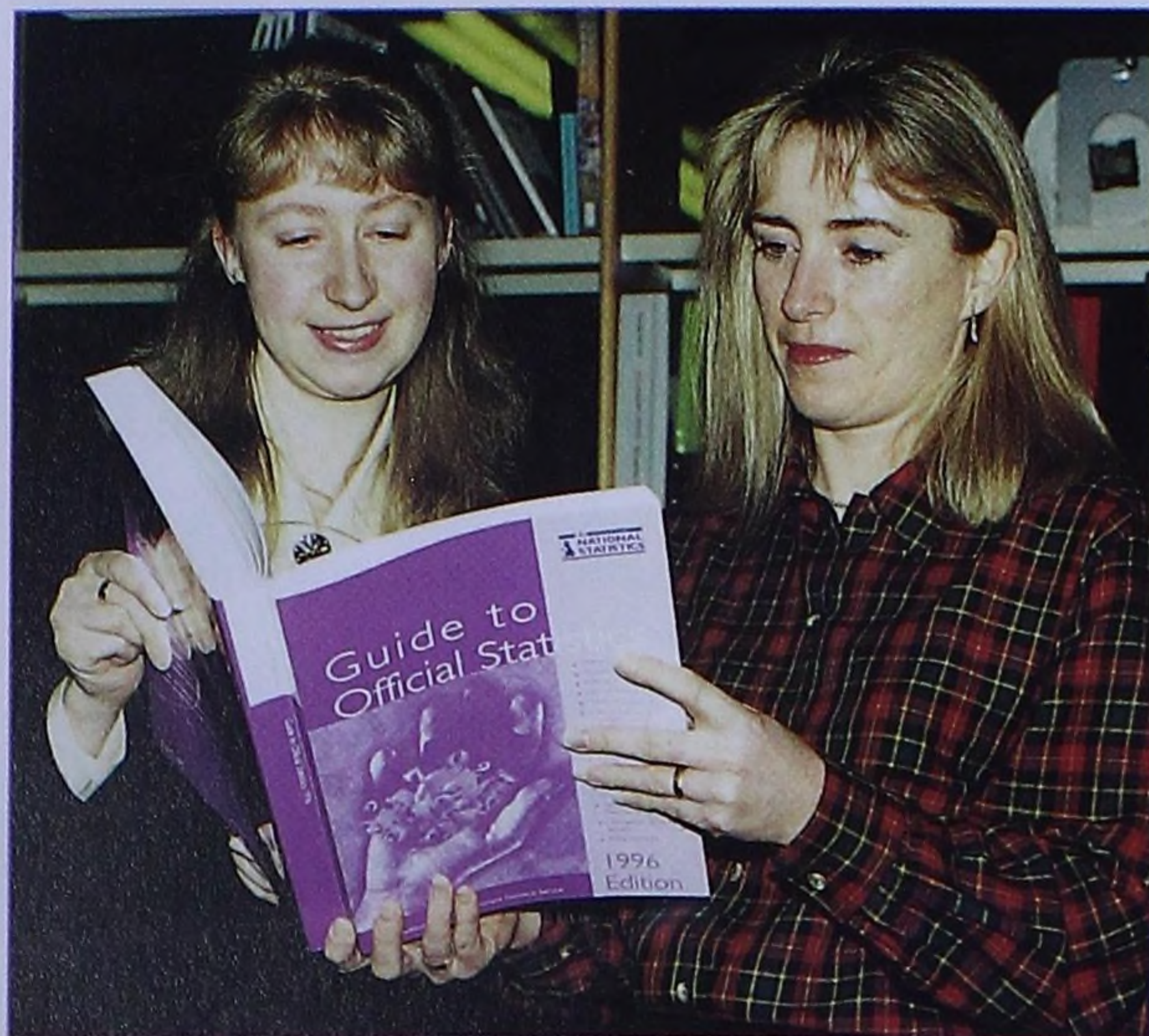
Mike Koudra or Linda Murgatroyd
Social Statistics Development Branch
Room 1814/1815, Millbank Tower
Millbank, London SW1P 4QQ.
☎ 217 3000 Exts - 4628/4849

REFERENCES:

Gershuny J and Smith R - ESRC Research Centre on Microsocial Change - *Essex University*

'Report to the Central Statistical Office on the Development of a Simple Time Diary Schedule' - *October 1995*

OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS



"HMSO, ISBN 0-11-620606-3, priced £35.95"

The new *Guide to Official Statistics* was published on Thursday 4 April 1996 by the Office for National Statistics.

The *Guide to Official Statistics* is an essential comprehensive reference tool for anyone who uses official statistics. It acts as a signpost to the wealth of economic and social information available from the Government Statistical Service and other official organisations throughout the United Kingdom. It is aimed at business people, researchers, academics, students, librarians, people employed in both central and local government, journalists and all who need ready access to statistics.

Containing sixteen subject chapters, the *Guide to Official Statistics* presents details of official data sets and surveys, as well as statistical publications and databases. Telephone numbers of the statisticians producing these data are also given, to answer users' queries.

The *Guide to Official Statistics* will also become available in CD-ROM format.

Bringing together information about data produced across a wide spectrum of government departments and agencies in such publications as the *Guide to Official Statistics* is one of the main aims of the new Office for National Statistics."

PRODCOM REVIEW

Government surveys which are conducted on a regular basis have to be reviewed periodically. The aim of the review is to ensure that the surveys are necessary, are both efficient and effective and impose the minimum burden on contributors.

A review of the PRODCOM Quarterly and Annual Sales Inquiries has recently been completed and approved at Ministerial level. The review is very wide-ranging and covers areas such as background to the inquiry, uses of the data, international comparisons, costs (both government and industry) and possible options for further changes.

Contributors to and customers of the inquiry were widely consulted. The review identified a reduction of some 22% in compliance costs after the first year of introduction. The main recommendations, apart from the need to ensure that the inquiry continues covered a programme of methodological improvements and cost - reduction measures.

The review was compiled by Andrew Clark of PPS Division and costs £7.50 net. Copies are available from the:

ONS Library Newport ☎ 01633 812973

LONGITUDINAL SOCIAL STATISTICS

A GUIDE TO OFFICIAL SOURCES FEBRUARY 1996

There is a growing amount of longitudinal data which tracks individuals or households over a period of time through surveys or administrative sources. ONS has gathered together in this booklet information about 25 government datasets to make it easier for users to find out what is available. Information is collected, for example, on education, health, family formation, crime, benefit claimants and employment.

The report on each data source is divided in two: details of the data source, eg. recency of data and link between individual and household; and potential uses of data, including possible analyses of the data, though not all datasets are currently accessible by users outside Government.

Copies of the guide are available from:

Claudette Jamieson
Office for National Statistics
Room 1803, Millbank Tower,
London SW1P 4QQ
☎ 0171 217 4157

OFFICIAL STATISTICS GOVERNANCE AND CONSULTATION

A new publication - *Official Statistics Governance and Consultation* - was released by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on 1 April. It explains how official statistics is governed and the key role of consultation in this process. In particular it describes the main advisory and related committees concerned with official statistics, and explains how these can be contacted.

Copies can be obtained free from the:

ONS library ☎ 01633 812973

TRANSFER AND RELOCATION OF INQUIRIES TO FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

The Efficiency Scrutiny of CSO Business Inquiries conducted in 1993 recommended that inquiry work be concentrated within the Business Statistics Group. However, in the case of the Financial Institutions (FI) inquiries, the Efficiency Scrutiny recommended that "the CSO review more thoroughly when the FI inquiries should be included in the Survey Division".

The subsequent review has now been completed with the conclusion that responsibility for the FI inquiries excluding those to Banks and Building Societies, will transfer to BSG from 1 July and be located in the Overseas and Financial (OF) Division in Newport. The relocation of the inquiries from London to Newport will be completed by 1 October. Responsibility for the compilation and dissemination of National Accounts statistics for financial institutions will remain with Financial Institutions and Sector Accounts (FISA) Division in London.

The inquiries involved are those to insurance companies, pension funds, unit trusts, investment trusts, property unit trusts, security dealers, consumer credit grantors, specialist finance lessors and fund managers.

Robert Hay will be the grade 7 responsible for the inquiries in OF Division. Neil Badger will be the grade 7 responsible for the national accounts compilation in FISA Division.

For more information contact:

Robert Hay GTN 1211-2357 or
(01633) 812357

Neil Badger GTN 217 4388 or
(0171) 217 4388

NEW STATISTICAL BULLETINS - BEER, CIDER AND TOBACCO

From March 1996 two new monthly statistical bulletins are available:-

Beer and Cider Bulletin - provides details of beer production and duty paid clearances of beer and cider (in thousand hectolitres).

Tobacco Bulletin - provides details of duty paid clearances of home produced and imported cigarettes (in millions), and other tobacco products (in thousand kilograms).

These new bulletins complement those already available on clearances of spirits, wines (both fresh grape and made wine), hydrocarbon oils, and betting, gaming and lottery receipts.

Publication of all the bulletins is through a marketing agent:

Business and Trade Statistics Ltd
 Lancaster House
 More Lane
 Esher
 Surrey
 KT10 8AP

Contact:

Steve Gentle
 HM Customs and excise
 ☎ 0171 865 5249

TRIENNIAL REVIEWS OF DTI SURVEYS

In accordance with Prime Ministers instructions the DTI are currently carrying out reviews of three of their regular surveys. The principles behind the reviews are to ensure no undue burden is placed on respondents and that the data collected meets users needs. *The surveys being reviewed are:*

- ◆ the Quarterly Fuels Inquiry (which collects energy price data by size of industrial consumer);
- ◆ the Electricity -Generated survey; and
- ◆ the PQ1300 (which provides quarterly financial data, sales, operating expenditure, capital expenditure, etc, for the oil and gas extraction industries).

Results for all three surveys are published in Energy Trends and the Digest of UK Energy Statistics. In addition the results contribute to the national accounts.

If you wish to be consulted as part of any or all of the reviews (and have not already been consulted) please contact:

David Matz
 Room 2.G.3,
 1 Victoria Street
 London SW1H 0ET
 ☎ 0171 215 5261

PRISON STATISTICS ENGLAND AND WALES

This annual reference volume includes information on the population in, receptions into and discharges from Prison Service establishments in 1994, with series in many tables and charts covering the previous decade. There are eleven chapters which cover the prison population in general and particular sections of it such as remand, sentenced, non-criminals, fine defaulters and life sentence prisoners. There is a chapter on the ethnic origin and nationality of the prison population, one on reconvictions of prisoners after discharge and one on segregated inmates and the use of restraints and special cells. Each chapter begins with a list of key points and most have charts to illustrate the statistics.

Changes during 1994:

- ◆ The average population in custody (including those in police cells) in 1994 was 48,800, 4,200 higher than in 1993 and the highest level since 1988.
- ◆ The average population in police cells was 173 in 1994, which compares with 14 in 1993 and 1,083 in 1992.
- ◆ The seasonally adjusted population at the end of 1994 was 49,300, 2,500 higher than a year earlier.
- ◆ The remand population (after seasonal adjustment) rose by an average of 200 per month between December 1993 and June 1994 attaining a peak of 12,700. The population fell back slightly in the second half of the year, finishing the year 800 higher than in December 1993.

- ◆ The sentenced population (after seasonal adjustment) rose from 34,600 at the end of December 1993 by 500 a month in the first quarter of 1994, rising more gently during the remainder of the year, reaching 36,400 in December 1994.
- ◆ The higher prison population in 1994 continued the trend started in 1993 and followed a steep fall during 1992. It reflected the increased use of custody for both remands and sentencing which occurred during 1993 and 1994, partly reflecting the implementation of the Criminal Justice Act 1993 in August 1993.

Trends since 1984

- ◆ The population in 1994 was 5,400 higher than in 1984. There were rises of: 3,500 in the male remand population; 5,600 in the male adult sentenced population; 300 females; and 350 non-criminal prisoners. These were partly offset by a drop of 4,300 in the number of sentenced male young offenders.
- ◆ The size of the population has been greatly affected by changes in policy and practice in the criminal justice system over the period.
- ◆ The composition of the sentenced population by offence type has changed since 1984, with an increase for violent, sexual, and robbery offences from 32 per cent to 49 per cent; and for drugs offences from 5 to 11 per cent; whilst there has been a decrease for burglary, theft and other offences from 63 per cent to 40 per cent.

- ◆ The breakdown by sentence length has changed since 1984 - the proportion of males with short sentences (up to 18 months) fell from 54 per cent to 31 per cent with the proportion with long sentences (over 4 years) more than doubling from 18 per cent to 38 per cent.
- ◆ The proportion of the male sentenced population aged under 21 fell from 27 per cent in 1984 to 14 per cent in 1994.
- ◆ 87 per cent of the sentenced population in 1994 had been sentenced by the Crown Court, with 13 per cent sentenced by magistrates; the proportion sentenced by magistrates was around half that in 1984.

Fine defaulters

- ◆ The population of fine defaulters on 30 June 1994 was 540, little changed from the previous year. Nearly 22,500 fine defaulters were received in 1994, marginally higher than in 1993.

Reconvictions

- ◆ 51 per cent of all prisoners discharged in 1992 were reconvicted for a standard list offence within two years. *The rates for the main groups were:*
 - 45 per cent for adult males
 - 72 per cent for male young offenders
 - 38 per cent for females.
- ◆ Research has shown that the proportion of prisoners reconvicted within two years of discharge is strongly associated with a number of factors - the number and rate of previous convictions, age at sentence, type

of offence for which imprisoned, and sex; for example the two year rate of reconviction varies from 70 per cent for burglary and 62 per cent for theft and handling offences to 26 per cent for drugs offences, 25 per cent for fraud and forgery and 16 per cent for sexual offences.

Ethnicity

- ◆ On 30 June 1994 7,900 people in Prison Service establishments in England and Wales were known to be of ethnic minority origin compared with 7,300 in 1993.
- ◆ Ethnic minorities made up 16 per cent of the male and 25 per cent of the female prison populations at the end of June 1994.

Nationality

- ◆ In mid-1994 there were 3,700 foreign nationals in prison in England and Wales, accounting for 7 per cent of the male and 17 per cent of the female prison populations.

REFERENCE

Prison Statistics England and Wales 1994

(Cm. 3087)

HMSO £16.65

Published February 1996

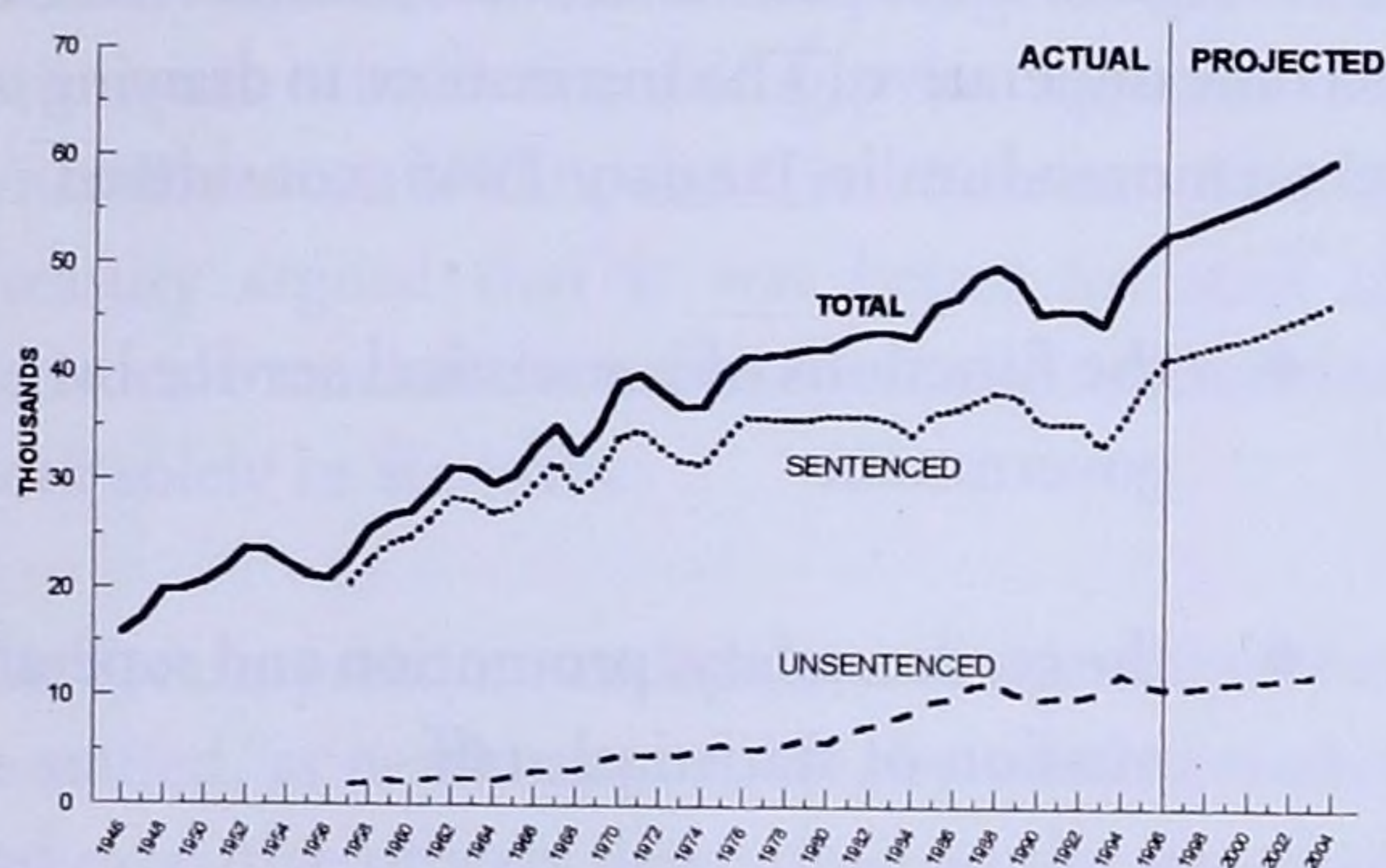
Contact for enquiries:

Roger Stevens ☎ 0171 217 5567

PROJECTIONS OF THE LONG TERM TRENDS IN THE PRISON POPULATION TO 2004

Home Office Statistical Bulletin 'Projections of the Long Term Trends in the Prison Population to 2004' which was published on 2 April 1996, describes the assumptions, methodology and results of the latest long-term population projections exercise. The projections, which are prepared annually, are required for the long-term management of the prison estate and for informing decisions on the prison building programme.

PRISON POPULATION 1946 - 2004



The chart above shows that the underlying trend in the prison population has been upwards since 1946; in 1995 the prison population was 51,000, more than treble the 1946 population of 15,800. By 2004 the prison population of England and Wales is projected to increase to 59,900.

The basic methodology involves projecting current trends of receptions into prison for various age and offence groups and then converting the projected receptions into population. Likely future sentencing practice is incorporated, as are projected changes in the general population. The results are adjusted for effects of recent legislation not yet reflected in past data, but no changes are made for legislation

that has not yet been passed by Parliament. Therefore the projections do not include adjustments for the sentencing proposals outlined in the White Paper 'Protecting The Public' published on 28 March 1996; the likely effect of these proposals on the prison population are contained in the White Paper itself.

As there are many factors which affect the size of the prison population considerable uncertainty is attached to the projections. Analysis of past fluctuations about the trend allows "confidence intervals" to be calculated. Confidence intervals show upper and lower population levels outside of which there is a chance that the population will fall. For example, there is a 5% chance (1 in 20) that the prison population in 2004 will be above 70,200 - the upper limit of the 90% interval - and similarly a 5% chance it will be below 49,600 - the lower limit.

REFERENCE

Projections of the Long Term Trends in the Prison Population to 2004

Home Office Statistical Bulletin 4/96

available from the:

Home Office Research and Statistics
Dissemination Unit
Apollo House
36 Wellesley Road
Croydon, CR9 3RR
☎ 0181-760-8340

Contact for enquiries:

Sheena Maclean ☎ 0171 217 5240

50 YEARS OF THE STATISTICIAN CLASS

The Statistician Class celebrates its 50th birthday in 1996. Details of arrangements for establishing a Statistician Group in the Civil Service were announced on 26 March 1946 in the "Whitley Bulletin".

The production of accurate and comprehensive statistical information bearing on most aspects of social and economic activity acquired a special importance during the 1939-45 war. In particular the Central Statistical Office was set up in 1941 as part of the central machinery of the Cabinet Secretariat. It advanced the co-ordination of departmental statistics and introduced standards for the collection and presentation of data.

By 1943 the tide of the war was changing and policies were being drawn up for a peace time economy. At this time, the Royal Statistical Society produced a report "to consider the organisation of statistics in government departments before, during and after the war". Their memorandum was published in 1943. It recommended that the co-ordination of statistical work should be continued by the CSO operating through a small committee with representatives from departmental statistical branches.

The CSO's existence was confirmed for peace time UK in March 1994 when the then Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that the CSO would form some part of the permanent machinery of government.

The Treasury considered the appropriate organisation and staffing of statistical divisions (both at the CSO and in departments). They were assisted by the RSS 1943 memorandum and a report produced by the Institution of Professional Civil Servants (IPCS).

The IPCS argued there would be a demand by the Government for comprehensive statistical information in both the national and international fields during the period of reconstruction and on a scale at least commensurate with that called for during the war. The type and scale of statistics required in the national sphere was indicated in a White Paper on Employment Policy issued by the Ministry of Reconstruction in 1944 in which the Minister listed the principal classes of statistics necessary for the efficient operation of an employment policy. This list included statistics on employment, savings, capital expenditure, production, consumption, stocks, foreign capital movements and the balance of payments. In view of this demand the IPCS argued that a permanent statistical service had become imperative. The Institution, in drawing up its memorandum in January 1945, considered

- ◆ the functions of a statistical service in government
- ◆ the grades, salary, promotion and superannuation of statistical staff
- ◆ qualifications and recruitment of statistical staff
- ◆ relationship between statistical branches in departments and the CSO.

Before the war, statistical divisions were commonly staffed mainly by executive or occasionally by administrative officers who had an aptitude for the work. The RSS memorandum pointed out that whilst it did produce some statisticians of high accomplishment, it was a method which left much to chance and its success was uneven. During the war a number of highly qualified statisticians, including three subsequent Nobel Prize winners, entered statistical divisions to its great advantage. The RSS memorandum argued that the level of technical ability be kept high and that it should be achieved, in part, by recruiting university graduates

who had appropriate training in statistics, often as part of another main subject such as mathematics or economics. The RSS went on to suggest that the need also be met by providing training for suitable young recruits after entry.

The Treasury considered whether it was appropriate to introduce a separate class of statisticians with its own scale of pay. It concluded that statistical branches should be staffed with members of the general classes appropriately qualified and trained. Treasury argued that much of the statistical work in departments could best be done by officers familiar with the work of the department and could thus be available for duty in any of the general branches. Treasury also noted that a knowledge of statistical techniques would increasingly be required for generalist work within the Civil Service. Finally Treasury argued that it was better for staff in statistical branches not to be too closely restricted to work solely in statistics.

The Treasury recommended that statistical branches be staffed, as nearly as possible, by administrative and executive officers depending on the nature of the work. Where exceptionally the work fell wholly within the scientific sphere, the Treasury argued that staffing should follow the normal pattern for recruitment into the scientific class. This latter point was a bone of contention. The National Staff Side was unable to agree to it and reserved the right to request departmental discussions when any such specific staffing issues arose.

In the Whitley Bulletin announcement in April 1946, it was proposed that as soon as conditions returned to normal after the war, the Civil Service should recruit a small number of statisticians each year from university graduates who had taken honours in statistics combined with mathematics, economics or an appropriate subject and who had a year or two in post graduate research or in industry. Those recruited would be assistant statisticians in a grade with conditions identical to those of the

assistant principals' grade. They would be recruited through the normal administrative competitions subject to opportunity being given to demonstrate the necessary qualifications in statistics.

Posts of statisticians were established with conditions of service identical to those of the principal grade. At a higher level, a few posts of chief statisticians were established to which conditions identical with those of the assistant secretary grade applied.

Finally the Treasury memorandum recognised that it was desirable for statisticians with high academic qualifications to have the opportunity of exchange to posts outside the Civil Service and in particular to posts in universities. For pensions not to be a barrier to the free interchange, especially with universities, it was proposed that assistant statisticians be brought under the university's pension scheme rather than that of the administrative Civil Service.

The Treasury's memorandum published in April 1946 was slow to take effect. First statistics was a subject only taught in a few universities in the 1940's. Secondly statistical recruits not only had to pass the administrative entry requirements but also had to pass separate statistical examinations. Many recruits were undoubtedly content with prospects in the administrative Civil Service which did not necessitate the extra hurdle of passing statistical exams. Recruitment to the new statistician class proceeded very slowly. It was another fifteen years or so before a separate statistician recruitment competition was established. Even with a new statistician class we had to await until 1968 before the GSS saw its birth.

Reg Ward

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Whitley Bulletin: *April 1946.*
Keeping Score: *Ward & Doggett 1991.*

NORTHERN IRELAND

LAUNCH OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND STATISTICS AND RESEARCH AGENCY (NISRA)

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (previously the Statistics and Social Division of the Northern Ireland Department of Finance and Personnel) was launched as a Next Steps Agency on 29 March by the Rt Hon Sir John Wheeler, Minister of State at the Northern Ireland Office.

Welcoming the launch of NISRA, the Minister told the gathering of Agency staff and customers that timely and reliable statistical and research information is central to modern policy management. He congratulated Mr Edgar Jardine on his appointment, following an open competition, as Chief Executive of NISRA and wished him and the NISRA staff every success in meeting the challenging targets outlined in the Corporate Plan. Responding on behalf of NISRA, Mr Jardine thanked all who had helped to bring NISRA to the launch stage. He announced that the Agency had received the endorsement of the Northern Ireland Citizen's Charter Panel for its Charter Statement. The Statement described the standards of service which the public may expect when dealing with Agency staff.

Mr Jardine also said that the Agency would continue to have as a priority the development of its staff and noted that the Corporate Plan committed NISRA to achieving an accreditation as Investors in People.

THE SCOTTISH OFFICE

The Economics Advice and Statistics Division of the Scottish Office Education and Industry Department published the reclassified Index of Production and Construction for Scotland (1990=100) in August 1995. The reclassification process involved the allocation of each contributing company to a new industrial classification based on the 1992 Standard Industrial Classification (SIC92), and the calculation of new weights to reflect the contribution of each reclassified sector, to the total value added in 1990 the base year.

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HOUSING STATISTICS

The second Scottish House Condition Survey was launched on 1 February 1996, following on from the first survey in 1991. It is expected that around 15,000 homes will be visited with a physical inspection of each dwelling taking place as well as an interview with one of the occupants. The main purpose of the survey is to produce an up-to-date picture of the condition of housing in Scotland.

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TAKE-UP OF SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

In December 1995 the annual Department of Social Security (DSS) publication 'Income-Related Benefits: Estimates of Take-up in 1993/94' was produced using, for the first time, data from the Family Resources Survey (FRS). The FRS has a number of advantages over the previously used Family Expenditure Survey, for example, the sample size is four times larger and the questions asked about benefit receipt are more detailed. For these reasons the estimates of take-up in this most recent publication are likely to be more accurate than in previous years.

The latest publication contains the first estimates of Council Tax Benefit take-up, along with statistics for Housing Benefit, Income Support and Family Credit. The figures show the number of people who actually take-up the benefits as a proportion of the number of people who are entitled to them, together with the amount of money they claim as a proportion of the amount that could be claimed if all those entitled took up their full entitlement.

For more information or to request a copy of the publication please contact:

Claire Robinson
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☎ 0171 9628233

**WELSH STATISTICAL LIAISON
COMMITTEE (WSLC)**

The committee has met twice recently, on 9 November 1995 and 22 February 1996, against the background of the reorganisation of local government (effective from 1 April 1996) with the aim of informing the Welsh Office Statistical Directorate, and the wider Government Statistical Service, of the requirements of local authorities in Wales for statistical material from central government sources. It aims to help authorities to keep abreast of, and influence, developments in government statistical work, particularly that for which the Welsh Office is responsible.

The committee will also identify issues, including those relating to the collection of statistical data from, and dissemination of data to, local authorities and methodological issues of common interest to central and local government, which need to be considered either by other groups or by working groups arranged by the WSLC.

While all 22 prospective new unitary authorities were invited to the February meeting, the issue of representation at future meetings is being taken forward with the newly formed Welsh Local Government Association. The next WSLC meeting is to be in September 1996.

For more information about the WSLC please contact:

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☎ 01222 825085

A STATISTICAL FOCUS ON WALES

This new summary publication, due out shortly, will present a colourful, easy to read overview of key statistics about Wales. It will be an ideal first point of reference for students, researchers, business and public administrators, containing an extensive bibliography of further sources of official statistics. It will be fully bilingual.

DIGEST OF WELSH LOCAL AREA STATISTICS

The *Digest of Welsh Local Area Statistics* is a new annual publication. The first 1996, provisional edition presents a wide, though incomplete, range of statistical information on the new Welsh unitary authorities. A further, more complete volume is to be published before the end of 1996 which will then be updated annually. It will then also include an appendix giving a brief statistical profile of each unitary authority.

The coverage of this publication is intended to complement that of the *Digest of Welsh Statistics*

which, in turn, will concentrate more on providing figures for a run of years, usually for Wales as a whole. Together they will provide comprehensive, general reference statistics for Wales.

REFERENCE

Digest of Welsh Local Area Statistics 1996;
Price: £7.00 (*post paid within the UK*)
ISBN 0 7504 1828 1

Provisional edition is available from:

Statistical Publications Unit SD5
Welsh Office
Cathays Park
CARDIFF
CF1 3NQ
☎ 01222 825054

BANK OF ENGLAND: INFLATION REPORT

The February Inflation Report provided a detailed analysis of recent monetary, price and demand developments in the UK economy, and offered the Bank of England's current assessment of the prospects for inflation over the following two years. It included analysis of recent money and credit growth and of the latest news on output, the labour market and earnings.

BANK OF ENGLAND: QUARTERLY BULLETIN

In addition to regular articles providing commentaries on the operation of UK monetary policy, developments in the world economy and in financial markets, the February issue of the Bank's Quarterly Bulletin contained the following items:

The over-the-counter derivatives markets in the United Kingdom (*by the Derivatives Markets Survey Team in Markets & Systems Division*). The survey of this market in the United Kingdom (part of a wider Bank for International Settlements exercise) provided useful information on derivatives markets and showed London to be the most active centre.

Can we explain the shift in MO velocity? Some time-series and cross-section evidence (*by Norbert Janssen of Monetary Assessment & Strategy Division*). The steady upward trend in narrow money velocity in the United Kingdom slowed in the 1990s, coinciding with fewer cash-saving financial innovations and lower inflation.

Saving, investment and real interest rates (*by Nigel Jenkinson of the Bank's Structural Economic Analysis Division*). The G10 finance ministries and central

banks published, in October 1995, a report of a study of savings, investment and real interest rates. This report described the study's conclusions and policy recommendations. It also included the Bank of England's work supporting the study.

Central bank independence and accountability: theory and evidence (*by Clive Briault, Andrew Haldane and Mervyn King, of the Monetary Analysis Division*). Accountability and transparency can help reduce the inflation bias that might otherwise result from discretionary policy-making. Accountability can serve as a partial substitute for reputation among central banks whose monetary frameworks have yet to establish themselves fully.

Trade with newly industrialised economies (*by Alistair McGiven of Structural Economic Analysis Division*). In the past 25 years, trade between the OECD and the newly industrialised economies (NIEs) rose significantly, presenting both opportunities and challenges for producers in the OECD countries.

The Guilt-edged market: developments in 1995 Numerous gilt market reforms were announced in 1995. This annual article described these reforms and reviewed primary and secondary market developments in the gilt market during the year, highlighting key statistics on stocks issued, stocks outstanding and turnover.

Changeover to the single currency (*by John Townend, a Deputy Director of the Bank*). In this article, the European Monetary Institute document on the introduction of a single European currency was set in a UK context, with an account of the Bank's actions.

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Statistical News provides a comprehensive account of new developments in British official statistics, and it is designed to help and inform all with an interest in these statistics. It is essential reading for everyone who needs to keep up-to-date with the latest in this wide-ranging and dynamic area.

Official statistics in United Kingdom are produced by the Government Statistical Service (GSS) and other official bodies such as the Bank of England and Northern Ireland government departments.



The GSS comprises around 5,000 staff located in over 30 departments and executive agencies, the largest of these being the Office for National Statistics.

Every quarter Statistical News includes four or more articles which describe a subject in depth; these subjects range from the latest surveying techniques to statisticians' projects in Zambia. The News from around the GSS and beyond section carries shorter articles from each department and associated organisation on their latest statistical ventures and plans. The Supplement of New Surveys and Departmental Publications is a reference document for all recent output and products.

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(Annual subscription £45.00 including postage)

ISBN 0 11 537451 - 5

ISSN 0017-3630

ISBN 0-11-537451-5



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